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THE MARKS OF THE BEAR CLAWS

BY

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AUTHOR OF "THE RACE FOR COPPER ISLAND," ETC.

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The Marks of the Bear Claws

CHAPTER I.

RED BEAR IS OBSTINATE.

"HE won't come. Monsieur, he won't come."

"I am glad to hear it, boy."

"But, Monsieur, you don't know him. He'd protect us during the whole voyage; he never sleeps; he's always on the watch."

"I see, you want him for a watch-dog. I'd rather call him a snake, for he's always hiding around the village. He has a guilty look, that Indian, and I don't trust him, and am glad that he's not coming."

"I've explained the reason of his action, monsieur; he is afraid of Father Marquette. His father made him promise when a boy not to be-

come a Christian and told him not to go to the Black-robe's house. He is superstitious, there is no doubt about that. But can you blame him? Are not half of his people that way? I heard Father Marquette say the other day that it took centuries to convert the French. Give the poor Indians a chance; give Red Bear a chance. In fact I'd hoped that the voyage would bring him closer to the priest and be the means of converting him."

"Well, Paul; he is your friend and I admire you for defending him, but I say again, that I'm glad Red Bear is not coming."

"You may be sorry before the voyage is over."

"Yes, I may, but just jump out of my way, young fellow. I must have this canoe ready before night and give it a trial."

"Can I help you?"

"Yes, you can help me. The Ottawa flotilla is to start for Quebec this morning, and you can

help me by helping the Bear into one of the canoes with instructions to stay in Quebec."

"He doesn't need any help. I've been talking with him for an hour. He has made up his mind to go, and nothing can move him."

"Then I have one thing to say; don't stop the Bear. Let him go to Quebec, and to-morrow I hope we'll be able to start in the opposite direction."

The boy said nothing, but stood watching his companion, who with thread, made of the bark of leatherwood, was stitching the side of a birch canoe. But the lad's thoughts were about the Indian friend who was so soon to leave him. The flotilla of thirty canoes was to start for Quebec that morning. Would it not be possible to detain the Indian until the convoy of canoes had departed? His face suddenly brightened. With a pleasant "good morning" and a graceful bow he left the lake shore.

The Frenchman who was working on the canoe

was named Felix Lataupine — one of a party of six preparing to start on a voyage of discovery the following morning. He was of medium size, with a full round face, dark eyes, and coarse black hair. For years a soldier on the upper Saint Lawrence and afterward a hunter on the plains of Illinois, Lataupine had escaped the contaminating influence of the camp, and in the midst of corrupt companions had led a truly Christian life. Inured to hardships, acquainted with the waterways of the country, deeply interested in any undertaking for the public good — bold, faithful, and jovial,— he was both a useful and a pleasant associate.

His aversion for the Indian boy, called Red Bear, was not without reason. The latter was an unconverted Huron over whom the missionaries had absolutely no influence. When a child, his father, a superstitious chief, had made him fast for several days and nights, and at the end of each night had asked the boy whether he had

dreamed of any animal. On his replying that he had not, the fast was continued until the mother, seeing the boy was wasting away, told him to say that he had seen a bear in his dream. The delighted father took from his neck a string of bear claws, and placing them on the head of his son consecrated him to the Great Bear, which from that time was to be his protector. He was told that the one condition of his protection was that he should not become a Christian. The ceremony had made such an impression on the boy that he was afraid to approach the missionaries, who were regarded as the enemies of the spirit who was to protect him. The Indian was known, too, to be treacherous and unfaithful. There was but one person in all Canada who trusted him, a lad by the name of Paul Guibeau,— the very one who had just pleaded for the Indian with Lataupine.

"Remember, that he is to leave with that flotilla this morning," cried Lataupine to Paul, for

the boy seemed to be meditating some scheme, and his companion rightly interpreted his action as planning to retain his Indian friend. "If you don't see that he starts, I'll bind him hands and feet and give him to one of the Christian Ottawas to take to Quebec as a prisoner."

Paul turned and could see the smile on Lataupine's face as he delivered himself of this threat; for the big-hearted Frenchman, while he despised and distrusted the Huron, was a warm friend of Paul. The latter understood the nature of the threat and responded in the same bantering, joking way: "The Bear is going with us — and I predict that he will save your life and mine."

"I'd drown him the first day," replied Felix Lataupine in a loud voice, as he smeared one of the seams of the canoe with tar.

"Father Marquette wants him with us," said Paul turning and unconsciously retracing his steps slowly.

who had asked him to secure some flowers for the mission chapel.

"I do believe that Paul has been influenced by the tricks and incantations of that devil of a Huron," muttered Lataupine as he stirred the tar. "The Indian cannot come! He must not come! He'll make a pagan of Paul and bring a curse on the expedition." The Frenchman looked up from his work and watched the boy, who was walking briskly toward the missionary's cabin, holding his beaver-skin cap in his right hand and letting the warm May breeze play through his long black hair. He was low of stature, with broad shoulders, and a large round head. His short jacket and trousers of bluish-gray cloth were worn and faded; but around his waist, and tied with a double knot, was a new, yellow sash. His French boots, which reached to his knees, were torn and patched. Still there was nothing slovenly in the boy's appearance; his long residence at a frontier post had made it im-

possible for him to discard his old clothes for others which were newer and better. "As fine a lad as I ever saw," continued Lataupine, talking to himself as he stood erect and admired the physique of his sturdy friend. "He is strong and active, too, and a good oarsman — rather young for the work, but I'm sure he can stand the voyage. Pierre says he is but sixteen, but he looks seventeen or more. That sash will lose its yellow before he gets back from the voyage. I wonder whether he knows the difficulties before him."

Thus mused Lataupine to himself, while again and again he resolved to prevent the Bear from joining the expedition. Paul at the same time was maturing his plans to have the Huron accompany them.

CHAPTER II.

FAREWELL TO THE BEAR.

"GOOD morning, Father, I have come to get the lilacs for you."

"Will you be able to find them?" replied Father Marquette, who walked out from his little mission cabin, and placed his right hand upon the shoulder of the boy.

"The island is not large, and I do not see how I can miss the flowers, if the bush is as high as you say it is."

"I have not seen the shrub for a year, but it was then fully ten feet tall — taller in fact than any I have seen in Europe."

"Was it in bloom, Father?"

"No, it was too early in the spring, but I remember that the buds were beginning to swell and to promise a bountiful supply of blossoms.

The bush is about twenty feet from the shore, and a little west of Eagle Bluff."

"Then I'll have no difficulty in finding it."

"The lilac is dear to me on account of its associations," said the priest. "When I was a student at the Jesuit college in Rheims, a missionary returned from the far east and brought with him, among other new plants, one that was called the sacred flower of the gods of Persia. Years after, when I returned to teach in the same college, the walks were lined with these beautiful lilacs and the odor from them pervaded the garden. I remember how we decorated the altar of the Blessed Virgin with these choice flowers, and the perfume filled the chapel. That year Father Mercier, now in Quebec, left the college for the missions of Canada. I gave him a small root and asked him to plant it in New France, and added that, when it was time for it to bloom, I should join him in the New World. When he arrived in Quebec, Father Dablon was starting for the

lakes, and at his request carried this shoot with him. Stopping at the island on his way to this mission, he planted the root. Last year he visited me at the mission and told me where I could find the shrub. I did find it, but, as I said, it was too early in the spring for it to bloom. I am quite sure that it is blooming now, and with its flowers we must decorate the altar of the Blessed Virgin."

"I'll do my best to get them, Father."

"And when you have cut them, place them in the canoe carefully, so as not to break the stems."

"Certainly, Father; and now I must be off, for I want to take Red Bear with me so as to return before the Ottawa flotilla starts for Quebec." Paul hung his head as he made this last statement, for he had resolved to detain the Bear until the Indian convoy had sailed. "You know, Father, that Red Bear is going back to Quebec."

"It is just as well; even when I gave you per-

mission to bring him I doubted about the wisdom of the plan."

"I know the men are opposed to his going, but I think they're making a mistake." And the boy remained unshaken in his resolution to make this last effort to retain the Huron. The lad felt that he was to undertake a perilous expedition, and in this he shared the convictions of his older associates. But the others, so thought Paul, did not know the value of the Bear as a protection against all dangers and surprises. Paul was not an obstinate or self-willed boy; in this instance he was of the opinion that he was the best judge of the Huron's worth. Father Marquette had given his consent to bring the Indian, and Paul intended, if it lay in his power, to bring him.

"If you are to return before noon you must start at once," were the warning words of the priest.

Before ten minutes had passed a light canoe pushed off from the northern shore of the Straits

of Mackinac, with its prow turned toward an island. In the canoe were Paul Guibeau and his Indian friend.

"Red Bear," began the French lad, when the canoe was some distance from the shore, "to-morrow Sieur Joliet and Father Marquette start on the voyage to find the great river called Mitchi-sipi. I am going with them. The Huron and Ottawa Indians think that we'll never return. They say that the river is inhabited by a demon who devours all who enter it. His voice is so loud that it sounds like thunder, and his teeth are sharper than those of the black bear. Whenever you are with me, I am safe. You protect me as the bird protects its young; you are like the young tree in the woods which shelters the flowers beneath it and protects them from frost; you can hide me away like the minnow deep in the water; with you I can escape from danger as quickly as the gull from the musket of the pale-face." Thus in figurative language,

which he knew would flatter and please, did Paul seek to win over his Indian friend.

The Huron understood French, but he was afflicted with a partial dumbness and conversed in monosyllabic, guttural sounds which few could understand. But aided by the vivid gesticulation of his friend, and from long association, Paul could follow his speech with but little difficulty. As the two conversed, the canoe danced over the choppy waves, and, driven by a slight wind from the north, drifted toward the mainland south of the strait. Paul, too, by a twist of the oar, turned the canoe from the island. Thus the light craft, zigzagging from side to side, covered almost twice the distance it would have taken had it gone in a direct line.

On reaching the island, it was necessary to go far beyond Eagle Bluff, for the shore here was wild and rugged, and the storm-beaten precipice was a perpendicular wall from twenty to thirty feet high. Extending from this shore of solid

rock can be seen to-day a ledge reaching out over the water which is so deep that the largest lake vessels approach within a few feet of the land. The ledge is now called Lover's Leap; but was then known as Eagle Bluff, for an eagle which had its nest near by was often seen to perch upon the rocky precipice.

"What a sweet smell," said Paul aloud, just as the canoe was gliding beneath the bluff. The water here, being sheltered by the island from the northern wind, was so smooth that the rowing was an easy task. Up to this point, the odor of the pine pervaded the air, but now it was no longer perceived, and the air was filled with the fragrance of some unknown flower. "Can that be the lilac?" continued the boy, looking along the precipice. Not a flower could be seen in the bare crevices of the rocks.

The two canoemen finally landed at a place where they could climb the shore. Working their way through the dense pines, they reached

Eagle Bluff, from which as a guiding point they sought the place where the lilac grew. Brushing aside the pines they suddenly came upon the coveted shrub; and not one, but a patch of them, covered with blooms from the lowest twig to the topmost leaf. Here were flowers sufficient to beautify not only the little altar but the entire mission chapel. The slender sprout from the college in Europe had grown and ramified until here in the midst of the pines it claimed a little world of its own. Nor has it ceased to grow, for in the course of two centuries it has covered not only the island but the entire northern peninsula.

Paul was purposely slow in cutting the flowers and carrying them to the canoe, where each bunch was carefully deposited. It was noon before a sufficiently large quantity had been collected. When the boys returned for the last load, their attention was attracted by something on the lake just visible through the thick undergrowth. Running to the edge of the precipice to get a bet-

ter view of the object, they saw at a glance that it was the flotilla of canoes on its way to Quebec.

With all his natural shrewdness, the Bear did not suspect his friend of treason. With his hand shading his face from the morning sun, he glanced now at the canoes, now at the clear deep water beneath him. Running back to the cluster of flowers, and placing a string of bear claws in a bunch of lilacs which Paul had cut, he as quickly returned to the edge of the precipice. Suddenly, with the quick, graceful movement of a gull, he dived into the lake. He soon arose to the surface and with rapid strokes swam toward the convoy of boats fully half a mile away. Perceiving him, the Indians in one of the canoes came to his rescue.

Paul saw him taken into the canoe, stripped of his wet clothes and dressed in furs, a large quantity of which the Ottawas were carrying as merchandise to Quebec. He stood watching the flotilla until it vanished, and then with a heavy heart

gathered up his flowers. As he did so, the string of bear claws fell from the bunch of lilacs. Thinking that Red Bear had left them by mistake, he put them into his pocket to keep in remembrance of his friend.

CHAPTER III.

STEPHEN DORVAL.

ON the northern shore of the Strait of Mackinac stood the mission of Saint Ignace. Within the rectangular palisade of pine trees were grouped the rude cabins of the Huron and Ottawa Indians. Christians though they were, they did not always manifest that brotherly love and harmony which the priests taught them should be among the first fruits of their conversion; and for the sake of peace a second palisade, smaller than that which protected the mission, separated the two tribes.

To the south of the village, and within the enclosure, were the chapel, the missionary's cabin, and accommodations for the hunters and traders who came to spend the winter at the straits. Farther up the beach were the wigwams of some

fifty pagan Indians who refused all communication with their converted tribesmen, and preferred to starve and freeze rather than enjoy the warmth and comfort of the mission. With them lived a trapper by the name of Stephen Dorval. He belonged to that wild class of coureurs-de-bois or bushrangers, who knew no law, and were at times wilder and more savage than the savages themselves.

Among those who had spent the winter at the mission was Louis Joliet, who had been sent by the Governor of Canada, Frontenac, to undertake the discovery of the great river, called Mit-chi-sipi, of which so many strange reports had reached Quebec. As representing in person the highest official in New France, Joliet had been given a cabin next to that of the missionary, Father Marquette. Here, after the evening May-services, previous to the departure of the expedition, Joliet was making his final preparations. He was just folding away some birch-

bark to be used as writing material, when there was a knock at the door and in walked Stephen Dorval.

"Monsieur, may I speak with you for a moment?" asked he.

"And may I ask who you are?" was the reply as Joliet folded his birch-bark and placed it on the rustic table by his side.

"You ask who I am, monsieur! We have spent the winter here at the mission and you do not know me?"

"We have never met before."

"No, we have never met. I am not good enough for you and for your company. Still I was born and educated in France, and came of a family of greater distinction than that of Sieur Joliet. I am Stephen Dorval." There was something of refinement in the tall, gaunt figure which indicated that the trapper had once enjoyed the advantages which he claimed.

"Stephen Dorval," repeated Joliet. "I

should have known you, monsieur, from all that I have heard of you."

"You have heard nothing that was good. I venture to say that I have not a friend in Canada."

"You have certainly deserved punishment at the hands of the government, if all is true that people say about you."

"I do not know what is said about me, and I care less!" There was a tone of contempt in the speaker's voice.

"And are you not afraid of being arrested and carried to Quebec?"

Dorval drew himself up to his full height and deliberately folded his arms. "Monsieur Joliet," said he, "I do not believe that twenty men could take me to Quebec; I do not know how I'd escape, but I'd do it. I am not a man to boast. I have more than the cunning of the savage. If nature has made me an outlaw, she has given me wonderful instincts of self-preservation. I repeat it,

I will never be taken to Quebec a prisoner; although God knows I have often deserved it. I have broken every law made by the Governor. I have sold whiskey from Quebec to Lake Tracy. I have traded illegally, I have robbed trading posts, I have done all kinds of evil. I am not saying this to boast of it. I know it is wrong. I am ashamed of it. I got started in the wrong way, and I continued in the wrong way. But there is one thing I have not done; I have not stained my hands in human blood, not even Indian blood. I have never killed a human being."

For some time there was a silence. Joliet wondered what had brought the man to his cabin, and what had forced this confession. The visitor did not know how to begin to announce the object of his coming, or rather he felt that he had begun in the wrong way.

"The Indian boy, Red Bear, is not going on the expedition," resumed Dorval in a modified tone.

"No."

"Has he already started for Quebec?"

"So I am told," and Joliet wondered of what interest this could be to the visitor.

"Was not one of the two canoes made to accommodate four persons?"

"Three the size of Lataupine would fill it."

"Monsieur," said Dorval. "I have come to ask a favor."

"And what is that favor?"

"I want to accompany you on your voyage of discovery."

Joliet stepped toward the fire place in which a blaze was lighting up the cabin and dispelling the chill of the evening, then turned and faced the visitor. "Monsieur Dorval," he began, as he glanced at the wild costume of the visitor who was dressed like the Indians with whom he associated, "I am a representative of the government of New France, and you are an outlaw in the eyes of this same government. To permit

you to accompany the expedition would be to receive you in the service of the government. Do you not see that your request is impossible?"

"It does look that way," and Dorval stood for some minutes in silence. "Listen to me, for a moment," he began again. "Is there no hope for one who has done wrong? Must he always remain an outlaw, a convict? Is there no chance for him to reform? Is prison or death the only alternative? You have just finished the services in the chapel —"

"Yes, and they were very impressive," interrupted Joliet. "Never before did I hear Father Marquette speak with so much feeling."

"I was in the chapel. I do not know why I went, but I was there, and while I was there I resolved to be a better man. I want to give up this savage life and return to civilization. I want to begin the practice of my duties as a Christian. Am I first to serve in a French prison? Is there not some other way of beginning a better life?

Can I not work in the service of France, and when I have proved that I am no longer an outlaw, will you not ask pardon of Frontenac for me? If you refuse me this help, how am I to begin to reform? Monsieur, here is the solemn promise that Stephen Dorval is a changed man from this minute if only he gets this chance to reform." Again Dorval folded his arms and stood in respectful silence.

Joliet, too, was silent.

"I repeat it, monsieur, I repeat that I can be of service to the government," again began the pleader, profiting by the silence of the leader. "And I can do the government great harm. As I said before I will not go to prison — no one can put me there. If I am pardoned, I have no friends to help me to make a living, and will be forced to go back to my savage life. If I am not pardoned, I must continue in my savage life and remain an enemy of the government. If I am permitted to work for the government and prove

that I deserve pardon, I can continue in this service. Dorval's rifle will be a protection to you, his knowledge of the savages and their ways will be a guard to you, and lastly his fidelity in the service of New France will prove that Stephen Dorval has made no idle boast."

"I have no reason to doubt the sincerity of your promise," replied Joliet; "but your proposition is a rather strange one, and I must have time to consider it."

"Then I shall await your answer until to-morrow morning," and Dorval turned to leave the cabin.

"Wait," said Joliet, as the stranger opened the door. "I had thought of talking the matter over with Father Marquette before giving you my answer, but I know he will leave the decision with me. It is late now, and to-morrow morning we shall not have time to discuss the question. Monsieur Dorval, I take you at your word. You may come with us to share the glories and the

hardships of the voyage. But it will not do to join the expedition here at the mission, for neither the French nor the savages would understand why you had been admitted as one of the party. You know where Gull Point is?"

"I do."

"Then wait for us there to-morrow."

"Thanks," said he, as he grasped the hand of Joliet. "To-night you have made a man of Stephen Dorval, and I promise you that you will never regret what you have done for him."

CHAPTER IV.

PIERRE AND FRANÇOIS.

PIERRE was watching François and François was watching Pierre. It was only about a trifle, but each was determined to have his way.

Pierre was a cripple. His left shoulder drooped, his limbs were shrunken and stiffened by rheumatism, his face bore evident marks of suffering and exposure. He wore a short, shaggy beard which he trimmed with his hunting knife. François was tall and erect, and as nimble as a squirrel. He could handle a rifle or an axe with equal skill; the wild life of the woods did not rob him of his strength, but seemed only to harden his muscles and bronze his features. They were noted coureurs-de-bois or bushrangers, and had been chosen as members of the party

which was to undertake the discovery of the Mitchi-sipi.

Pierre was famous as a story-teller; François renowed as a musician. Many a time around the camp-fires did Pierre amuse his companions by rehearsing anecdotes and wonderful Indian legends. Many a time, in some distant hunter's lodge, did François with his fiddle stir the hearts of his companions, until these jumped to their feet and danced despite fatigue, or, when listening to some plaintive note, strove in vain to check the tears that flowed as they thought of absent loved ones.

Pierre had but one name; just Pierre and nothing more. He had run away from an orphanage in France, and had succeeded in boarding a vessel bound for New France. He had been called Pierre, he gave his name as Pierre, and that was his whole history. But François could boast of titles worthy of a nobleman, for his full name was François Dongan Vielle du Moussart. His

mother's name was Dongan, and he was called Vielle by his fellow coureur-de-bois, because he was the only one of the many bushrangers who carried a musical instrument on his hunting expedition. His vielle, or hurdy-gurdy, was a clumsy instrument, and was later replaced by a fiddle; but the name of Vielle still stuck to François.

The old vielle came near costing the life of Pierre and François and the rest of a hunting party on one occasion; for it attracted the attention of a straggling band of Indians, who took the hunters prisoners, and released them only after a liberal supply of tobacco had been dealt out. There were the same objections to the fiddle as there had been to the vielle; in fact there were stronger objections, for the sound carried farther, and the wild unexplored country into which they were to enter demanded more precautions.

Still François was determined to take his fiddle on the expedition; Pierre was equally

determined to have the fiddle remain behind.

"We are all ready," remarked François, as the two sat in the little cabin that same night before the departure of the expedition.

"Why, we have been ready for the past two weeks," replied Pierre, "and have been waiting for the weather."

"No, no; you are mistaken; only this minute were the preparations completed," affirmed François, as he balanced a box in his hands.

"What preparations?"

"The most important of them all."

"I don't understand," grunted the cripple.

"I have just finished this box; and it contains something which is necessary to make the venture a success."

"The maps of Sieur Joliet?" asked Pierre.

"No."

"Trinkets for trading with the Indians?"

"A poor guess."

"Seal grease for cooking?"

"No, no."

"And you say that it is necessary for the success of the venture?"

"Absolutely necessary."

Pierre thought for some time. "Does it belong to the priest?" he asked.

"No, monsieur, it belongs to Francis Dongan Vielle du Moussart."

"Then it isn't necessary for the success of the expedition."

"It is necessary. I repeat it, it is necessary.

"Not even Moussart is necessary. Only one man is absolutely necessary for this expedition, and it isn't Moussart. It is Pierre. He knows more of Indians and life in New France than any other Frenchman. Parbleu! Moussart would not be missed, and as for his old box, no one cares; it will only be a useless load in the canoes."

"Useless or not, the box is coming; and it holds my fiddle."

"Then it will not come."

"I say it will."

"Never! parbleu, never!" repeated the cripple, as he rose from his bench and hobbled across the cabin floor. "Why man, you came near being the death of me once when you brought the Iroquois upon us. How can we conceal the camp with a man playing a devil fiddle? If that fiddle goes, Pierre stays at the mission; and the others can't go without me."

"Don't get excited about a little music. I'll not play when there is danger of drawing the enemy upon us."

"Did you not draw the Iroquois upon us?"

"Yes, but no one knew they were near the camp."

"And may not the same happen again?" argued Pierre.

"You are not the leader of this expedition," claimed Moussart. "Sieur Joliet has given his permission, and I intend to bring the fiddle."

"Then — then —" Pierre muttered something about fiddles and Indians, as he crept to his hard couch. In a few minutes François had lain down and all was quiet within the little cabin.

CHAPTER V.

THE DANCE OF THE GREAT BEAR.

FROM his little cabin that night, carrying his fiddle in a birch box, François crept cautiously, so cautiously and quietly that he did not think that Pierre knew of his departure. But Pierre was watching François; he saw him turn toward the lake shore where the two canoes for the expedition were drawn up on the sand.

François did not, however, go to the canoes, but followed the narrow path which led to the camp of the pagan Hurons, and aroused Stephen Dorval.

"Who comes there?" were the challenging words of Dorval, as the intruder drew near the wigwam of the trapper.

"Moussart."

"Come on; I am the only one in the camp to-night."

"And where are the Hurons?"

"Old Poison Arrow has smeared himself with paint and led his braves into the forest."

"Is there any danger of his attacking the village?"

"No! His warriors are too few; but if he had a hundred braves with him the mission would be in danger."

"They are not far away," replied Moussart, who just then caught the wild cries of the excited Indians.

"No, they have gone to the sacred mound of the Great Bear; they often hold their dances and incantations there; but I never before knew them to be so noisy as they are to-night. In fact, I was just thinking of sending word to the fort to warn the men to be on their guard."

"I can bring them the news," interposed the visitor. "But first let me tell you the cause of

my coming here to-night. Sieur Joliet has informed me that you are to meet us at Gull Point to-morrow and join the expedition."

"I have the honor of being one of the party," acknowledged Dorval.

"Then may I ask a favor?"

"Certainly."

"Here is a birch box with my fiddle. Pierre objects to my taking it. I can't reason with the old fool. I am afraid that Joliet will agree with him and order me to leave the fiddle behind at the mission. To avoid all trouble, I want you to keep the box in your possession until we are some days on the voyage."

"I remember one night when you played for us in a camp on the Ottawa river," replied Dorval taking the box. "We may need the music to cheer us before we return."

"Thanks! And now suppose we visit the Hurons and find out the cause of all this noise."

"You have trapped and hunted for ten years in New France and know so little of the pagan Huron!" remonstrated Dorval. "Perhaps my life would be safe in their midst to-night, for they consider me one of their tribe, and in fact I have been as savage as the worst of them. Perhaps Father Marquette could venture among them, but you or any other Frenchman would be shot with arrows and burned at the stake."

"If they were Iroquois I could understand."

"The unconverted Huron is as cruel as the Iroquois and as treacherous." Here the yells and cries of the Indians grew louder. "Listen!" continued Dorval after a short pause. "They are possessed by demons to-night; and yet I do not understand the cause. It may be connected with the expedition of to-morrow. Old Poison Arrow has been moody and silent of late."

"Perhaps they witnessed the services in the

chapel to-night; this may have aroused them to practise their devil-worship," suggested Moussart.

"Possibly; yet such an explanation did not occur to me, for not a pagan was present in the chapel."

"But they knew of the services."

"Certainly."

"And may have to meet for their own diabolical rites."

The low beat of a war drum was heard; a fire blazed in the woods. "This means an attack upon the village," whispered Dorval.

"Shall we give the alarm?" asked Moussart.

"Wait for a few moments; I cannot believe that Poison Arrow would attempt so foolhardy a thing."

"He may think that, owing to the services and the preparation for the voyage, the Christian Indians are wholly unprepared."

"But he must see the madness of an attack

with so few." There was a pause broken at intervals by the sound of the war drum. "Come! come on!" were the orders of Dorval. "It is dangerous; but we must go and find out what these wild devils are doing."

Poison Arrow was the most treacherous of Indians. Pretending to befriend the Frenchmen and converted Hurons, he was secretly plotting their destruction. He saw the entire Huron nation converted to Christianity, and at the same time he saw that the land was being occupied by the French. To his mind the two facts were inseparably connected; the conversion of the pagan savages meant the loss of the country. How could he avert so great an evil? He could hope for nothing from his own people as they were mostly Christians. But far in the west, and along the banks of the great river, dwelt numerous tribes unknown to the French. Could they not be made to see their danger? Would they not follow him against the intruders?

But now the Frenchmen were starting for the country of these unconverted tribes. In a few years they, too, would be Christians. Poison Arrow felt that his last chance of saving his people was about to be lost.

The night before the departure of the voyagers the Indian chief sat in his wigwam wrapped in his robe of bear skins. Suddenly his resolution was taken. He besmeared himself with paint and sounded the war drum, and assembled around him his few faithful warriors. These he led to a mound sacred to the worship of the Great Bear. Like the Huron youth already described, these pagan Indians worshipped the bear, and looked to it for protection. Each warrior wore a robe of bearskin and carried a knife of flint.

The ceremony in honor of the Great Bear consisted of a dance around the mound, and then an attack upon the nearest trees which were supposed to represent enemies. Only one tree was

spared, and that had been previously marked with a circle drawn with bear claws. When the superstitious rites were ended, the chief called two of his bravest warriors, and appointed them to follow and scalp the Frenchmen. On their return, he himself intended to visit the tribes along the great river, and arouse them to a general insurrection.

CHAPTER VI.

HOW PIERRE DROWNED THE FIDDLE.

MEANWHILE Pierre, tired of waiting for Moussart, left the cabin to look for the box and violin. Down to the water's edge he went and fumbled among the articles which had been placed in the canoes. The provisions had not been brought out, but there were cooking utensils, and clothing, and fixtures for two tents. Then Pierre picked up a box. It felt a trifle heavy, but was just the size of the box in which François carried his fiddle. To it Pierre attached a stone, and threw what he imagined was the hated fiddle out into the lake.

"Parbleu! Now play your fiddle! Now make a noise and bring a dozen Indians to take a fellow's scalp! Pierre is a cripple, but not a fool! Only a fool would bring a fiddle along on such an expedition! Let him find his fiddle!

Let him cry for his fiddle! To-morrow Pierre will say that he knows nothing about the fiddle, and when we are a hundred miles from the mission, I'll tell François where he can find his fiddle! You can't fool Pierre! you can't fool Pierre!"

Pierre turned and limped away toward the cabin. Perhaps, he thought, he had been unwise in throwing the box into the lake; he should have taken the fiddle out and replaced it by some article of equal weight. Would not François look for the box, and, finding his fiddle gone, secure another in its place? Pausing and looking toward the water the cripple wished that he could restore the box, but it was at the bottom of the lake and there was no getting it. Another box must be substituted in its place. Pierre made his way to the mission storeroom, and found a box about the size of the one which contained the fiddle. Filling it with bark and sand, he concealed it among the tenting materials in the canoe. Then

he laughed and again limped off toward the cabin muttering to himself: "You can't fool Pierre! you can't fool Pierre!"

All was now quiet at the Mission of Saint Ignace. The war drum had ceased to beat; Poison Arrow and his braves had returned to their wigwams. Paul had fallen asleep with a heavy heart, because his friend, Red Bear, would not be with him on the voyage. Pierre and Moussart lay upon their hard couches in the same cabin, each thinking that he had outwitted the other.

In the little chapel a solitary figure knelt before the altar,— Father Marquette. His was a fervent prayer wafted heavenward with the blended scent of the lilacs and incense. From his earliest childhood his had been a tender devotion to the Immaculate Mother of God; from his earliest childhood he had fasted in her honor on each Saturday of the year. He had placed his missionary labors in the New World under her special protection; and when he heard of the great

river of the west it was to her that he looked for guidance, that he might bring the knowledge of God to the tribes along its banks. His queen and mother had not forsaken him; and on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception had sent to him the one who was to be his companion in the work of discovery, for it was on the eighth of December that Joliet had arrived at the mission. In the few hours that glorious undertaking was to begin. Mary, the Great Mother of God, Mary, the Immaculate Virgin, was to be the chosen patroness of the expedition. His prayer, his tenderest love, his sweetest confidence were poured out to her that night before the small, dim altar:

"Hail, Daughter of God the Father; hail, Mother of God the Son; hail, Spouse of God the Holy Ghost; hail, Temple of the Holy Trinity; — by thy Virginity and Immaculate Conception, O most pure Virgin, keep my soul free from every stain of sin. Throne of the King who

sitteth above the Cherubim; Heavenly Gate through which we hasten from earth to heaven; Bride of God, by whom we are reconciled; Exhaustless Ocean of divine graces; Immaculate Vesture of Him who clothed Himself with light as with a garment; True Vine that bearest the Fruit of life; Saving Guide of wanderers; Rod of Aaron, that buds by the power of God; Candelabrum of seven lights, whose splendor surpasses the rays of the sun; Holy Mountain in which it hath pleased God to dwell; — my Salvation, my Consolation, my Joy, my Strength, my Guardian, my Patroness, Immaculate Mother, given to me by God, guide, bless, protect us in this expedition."

Thus prayed Marquette. Only the ignorant would call him a dreamer. With all his fervor, with all his tender love, history will write him down, not as an idle visionary, but will place him among the most practical and clear-sighted of men of his age. He had all the fidelity and com-

mon sense of Joliet and was skilled like him in forest lore and woodcraft, and those other traits which were inborn in the aboriginal inhabitants and were acquired by those who wished not only to win success but also to find means of subsistence amid the dangers and hardships of the early settlements of New France. Strange as it may seem, there was much that was common between the fiery Spaniard, who with his plumed companions first beheld the Mississippi, and the simple religious who a century later launched his canoe upon its waters. Both DeSoto and Marquette were fired with a chivalrous heroism which bore up enthusiastically in the midst of disappointments; both were born leaders of men, winning respect and confidence by making themselves one with those over whom they had authority. De Soto's work had more of the romance and was more in accord with the daring period in which he lived; but Marquette had more of the practical sense of later and more prudent times.

Marquette had all the bold resolve of La Salle without his fickleness and impractical schemes.

Go up to heaven, O prayers, with the incense and the odor of flowers! Look down with thy all-powerful protection, Immaculate Mother, for many are the dangers, and many are the enemies! Often must thou guide thy servant; often must thou defend him.

CHAPTER VII.

FAREWELL.

MORNING had not yet broken at the mission of Saint Ignace, but the gulls were abroad clamoring for their early breakfast. There was a ceaseless cry and call as the birds darted into the water, or waded along the beach to catch the unlucky crawfish or minnow stranded in the furrows of sand and pebbles as the waves receded. They continued to come from every direction, not in flocks, as did the ducks, nor in solid phalanxes, as the wild geese traveled, but singly or in pairs. In size they were about equal, measuring a yard from tip to tip, awkward and ungainly in their walk, but graceful and noiseless as they soared aloft or poised above their prey. Some were of a dull leaden color, and others as white as foam. There

seemed to be but little harmony among them; many were pilferers ready to seize the prize of more fortunate companions. The crowd grew larger and the clamor louder as the eastern sky became brighter. The sun appeared over the pines south of the strait, and the mission bell rang, at which the birds scampered away to the deep water to rest upon the waves after their morning's work.

And now the beach was thronged with Indians on their way to the chapel to assist at the morning Mass. After Mass the entire population assembled at the water's edge to witness the departure of the exploring party. It required but a few minutes to bring the simple equipments for the voyage. Near the smaller of the canoes stood Paul and Pierre, while Lataupine and Moussart took their positions by the side of their canoe, capable of accommodating seven persons, and loaded with most of the provisions and camp furniture. To the left of the party the Chris-

tain Hurons had assembled; to the right were the Christian Ottawas, and between them a group of pagan Indians, in front of whom and close to the water's edge were some twenty Frenchmen who had spent the winter at the mission.

To the shore came Father Marquette, clad in his priestly gown, which was worn by the missionaries even in their travels, and which caused the Indians to call the Jesuits, "Black-robes." To anyone seeing him about to embark the first thought would be: Why does one so delicate and frail undertake so perilous and difficult an expedition? He was a man of about thirty-five and seemed destined for the class-room or the pulpit rather than the drudgery and privations of the missions of New France. With his close-trimmed beard and neat though faded cassock, he stood in marked contrast with his dusky spectators. He was calm and dignified. In his face was a look of mingled love and simplicity, which won the hearts of the untamed savage and the

rugged hunter. He carried in his hand a crucifix — this was to be his banner, this his only weapon of defence.

The last to appear was Louis Joliet, the official representative of the Governor, Count Frontenac. Wishing to impress all with the solemnity of the occasion, he had dressed himself in rich attire purchased in Paris. He wore a coat of dark velvet embroidered with gold, and waistcoat of red satin brocade. The coat reached to his knees and almost covered his bas-de-bootes, or boot-hose, of brightest yellow. His boots had wide and ample legs, and were turned over just below the knee. A sword, which glittered in the rays of the morning sun, was supported by a wide and costly baldric. Although in strict accord with the style of the day, his hat did not seem to match the rest of his attire, being of a conical shape, with a wide brim, and a large feather drooping from the right side. In his hand he held aloft the flag of France, and with

the dignity and bearing of a soldier, he walked past the group of astonished savages to his canoe.

Out from the crowd stepped Old Louis, the venerable chief of the Hurons. "Pale-faces," he began, "I am old. I cannot count the times I have seen the full moon. Many times have I seen the ground covered with the green grass, and many times have I seen it covered with snow. Listen to an old man; listen to one who is the friend of the pale-face and the Black-robe. Are you looking for something to eat? Are you looking for something to wear? Are you looking for something to build a wigwam? Are you looking for bark to build your canoes? Listen to me. Listen to an old man. I have been far into the land of snow. I have been to the land where flowers always bloom. I have been to the great mountains where the sun rises. I have been where the sun goes down to sleep in the waters of the great sea. Listen to an old man; listen to one who is the friend of the pale-

faces and the Black-robe. In the waters before you there are more fish than in any other waters. In the woods around you last winter we killed as many bears as there are fingers and toes on five Hurons. Near you grow the best birch trees for making canoes. What can you find in other lands which we have not found here? Go not away, but stay with us here where the Great Spirit has given all things that are good."

The chief retired and took his place with his people. Then out stepped Running Deer, the chief of the Ottawas, and drawing around him his robe of moose skin, and folding his arms, harangued the voyagers: "Many years ago, Black-robe, you came to the poor child of the forest. You came to teach us the way to the land of the Great Spirit. For years we would not listen to your teaching. Our hearts were like the ground in winter time; we would not bear fruit. But you were patient. Day after

day you came to our wigwams, and when we would not listen you came the next day and the next. Then we listened to you, and by Baptism you made us the children of the Great Spirit. When our enemies drove us to the place where the sun sinks in the waves of the great water, you followed us; when we returned you again came with us. You built us a chapel where morning and night we prayed to the Great Spirit. And now you are going to leave us. What would the gulls do if the lakes were without water? What will the Ottawas do without the Black-robe? But since you must go, take this belt of wampum. For six moons did the squaws work at this belt. It is a belt of peace and not of war. Carry it with you, and may the Great Spirit protect you. And, pale-faces, may your canoes glide over the water like the gulls. May the water give you fish to eat and may the woods keep for you the fattest bears."

Neither during the speech nor after it was there the slightest noise or commotion. All was serious, all was solemn.

Lastly spoke Poison Arrow, pretending to be friendly even after he had plotted the death of the party. In his hand he held a bow eight feet in length, and his quiver, which hung from his left shoulder, was full of arrows, tipped with the sharpest flint, and ornamented with the richest feathers. With his bow he gesticulated wildly as he addressed the crowd and the members of the expedition. "Believers in the Great Spirit of the pale-faces," he cried, "you have come from the land of the rising sun to get our furs and skins. You have come to tell us of the Great Spirit, and we would not listen to you, because our medicine-men had told us not to listen to you. But we have been your friends. When you were hungry we always gave you what we had to eat. We have not taken your scalps and have not made you prisoners. Why do you leave us to find the great

river, the Mit-chi-sipi? It is the home of a great Demon. He will devour you; he will swallow your canoes. His voice is so loud that the hills shake when he speaks. His voice is like the mighty waters which fall from the lakes into the river. Upon the banks of this river you will find other red men, but they will not be friends. You cannot sleep in their wigwams. They have no furs for you. They have hammers of stone and knives of the sharpest flint," and the chief pulled a dozen arrows from his belt. "The fish is foolish that swims below the canoe where the spear is raised to strike it. The bear is foolish that eats the food in the trap. The duck is foolish that dives into the net. You are foolish if you go where the spirit of death waits for you. Pale-faces, farewell!"

The solemnity of the occasion was somewhat disturbed by an accident at the close of Poison Arrow's speech, for François Moussart, who was leaning against the side of his canoe, slipped and

fell. On regaining his position, he grasped the box which Pierre had substituted for the one which he thought had contained the fiddle. The cripple moved in that direction, and immediately there was a commotion which might have resulted in a serious onset; for according to Indian etiquette no one could stir on such occasions except the speaker. Understanding the gravity of the offence, Joliet waved Pierre back to his place, and began with a loud voice, adapting his language to the figurative speech of the Indians. "Red men and brothers, we have heard your words of warning and of esteem. You are as dear to us as is the spring sun to the young flower. Our departure from you is like the setting of the sun when all is left in darkness. But, brothers, we will return. Fear not for our safety. We go in the name of the Great Father of the pale-faces. When we find the Mit-chi-sipi, we shall gather together all the tribes who live along its banks, and tell them that we have to speak of peace. We shall show them the arrow

with the broken point, and tell them to fight no more. We shall build forts to protect them from the English and the Iroquois. We shall teach them to build houses and to cultivate the fields. Then we shall return to you. Fear not for our safety, for the Great Spirit will keep us from all harm. Farewell, brothers. Before the snow covers the ground, we shall be with you again."

The last to speak was Father Marquette. He told the Indians that another Black-robe would come to take his place. Morning and evening they were to say their prayers in the chapel, and at dusk were to assemble to sing hymns. Then he raised his cross and began the litany of the Blessed Virgin; at once the whole village joined in one loud chorus. When the canoes were far out on the lake, the singing continued. Then the refrain was scarcely audible; soon only the dip of the oars could be heard as the light crafts sped quickly and noiselessly over the waters of Lake Michigan.

CHAPTER VIII.

TWO CAUSES OF COMPLAINT.

PIERRE awoke. It was the morning after the first day's voyage. Pierre listened. He looked at the tent overhead, at the poles which supported it, and at the deerskins which covered it; he looked through the small opening of the tent at the lake near by, and at the camp-fire around which Lataupine and Paul were busily engaged preparing breakfast. Then Pierre listened again, and again looked at the tent, the lake, and his companions. Could that be the sound of a violin? Had not the hated instrument been sunk in Lake Michigan? Pierre raised the skin at the side of the tent, and saw, seated on a log, François Moussart, playing his violin. "Nom d'un chien," he growled.

"You are a sound sleeper," said Sieur Joliet,

thrusting his head beneath the covering. "You have no doubt heard the music without."

"Parbleu! I thought the infernal instrument was buried in the lake!"

"No! no! Stephen Dorval smuggled it into the canoe yesterday. Now that it is here, I want to say a word to you about it. I want you to give me your solemn promise, and your word as a gentleman, that you will not destroy the violin."

"Why am I suspected?" asked the cripple.

"Because you not only threatened to break the instrument; but, on your own confession, acknowledge that you attempted to throw it into the lake."

"I did try! I did try! And I am sorry that I did not succeed! Monsieur Joliet, that fiddle will be the death of this party."

"I shall see to that; only promise me that you will make no further effort to destroy the violin, and I promise you that it will cause us no harm,

for François has promised to leave it in my canoe, and to play it only when I give permission."

"I promise, monsieur."

"Your solemn word as a gentleman?"

"My solemn word as a Frenchman and a coureur-de-bois. One name is enough, but, there! you have them both."

"And now may I ask you what you did to destroy the violin?"

"I went to the canoes the night before we started and threw the box and the devil thing into the lake."

"Felix," cried Joliet to Lataupine, "your seal oil is in the lake at the mission."

"And how do you know, monsieur?"

"I'll leave Pierre to explain; he's not quite awake as yet. He'll tell you when you start."

"And what are we to use for cooking?"

"Bear fat will do just as well."

"And where am I to get the bear?"

"If I had time I could get you one this morn-

ing; but since we must start soon you can cook breakfast without it."

In the meantime Pierre had walked over to François. "Vielle," he began, "you are a sharper man than I gave you credit for being. Parbleu! I said that devil thing would never come on this voyage, but here it is. I have given my word that I'd not break or harm it. It is safe now unless you yourself smash it, or unless you attract some Indians who will not only break your music-box, but also scalp us, as they came near doing once before."

"I was taught a lesson then. I have promised the Sieur not to play a note until he has decided that it is safe to do so."

Pierre was beaten and humiliated. He took his defeat in the best of spirits, and never once showed any malice toward the man who had outwitted him.

Father Marquette, who had walked up the beech some distance to recite his office, now

joined the company and laughed heartily when told of the joke on Pierre. The breakfast was, necessarily a simple one of cold biscuits, warmed meat, and tea. It was calculated that the party had sufficient tea and sugar for the whole voyage. Only a small box of biscuits had been provided, since they would not keep for a long time; but several bags of corn were stored away in the canoes. For the rest the party depended on fish and game and wild fruit. They carried two tents, not like the pointed wigwams of the Indians, but lighter and more serviceable, the invention of Lataupine. The tent consisted of a horizontal bar, supported at either end by stakes, fastened at the top. The covering was of dressed deer-skin.

"Have we a pagan Indian with us?" asked Joliet, as he and Pierre were striking the tents.

"Indian?" repeated Pierre.

"Yes, Indian, and a pagan Indian. Don't you see these marks on the ground?"

"By the blessed angels!" cried Pierre. Then he went closer to Joliet and continued almost in a whisper. "That is the devil's work, but it was done by his agent, Dorval." Pierre stopped and examined the marks carefully. There could be no doubt about the matter — some one had drawn a circle around the camp with bear claws, stopping at intervals to press the sharp claws into the ground. Again Pierre went to Joliet. "Dorval is the man. I saw him going around the tents last night and wondered what he was about. He's the fellow that brought the fiddle with him, and he has brought his incantations, and with them the devil. Parbleu! He has been with the Indians so long that he believes in their devil tricks and incantations! He has brought more than a fiddle. He has brought the devil."

CHAPTER IX.

THE LEADER AND THE OUTLAW.

THE camp was some distance from the shore, where the rest of the party was awaiting the two men before embarking; no one, therefore, could catch the words of Pierre. The cripple felt that he had taken revenge upon Dorval for smuggling aboard the fiddle.

"Leave this matter to me," said Joliet. "Get into your boat and row off with the priest and the boy, and I'll say a word to Stephen Dorval that will let him know I'll have none of his superstitious practices on this expedition."

Carrying the light tents to the beach, the men placed them in the larger of the two canoes, Pierre embarking at once with Paul and Father Marquette. Joliet found an excuse for a delay

until the small canoe was some distance from the shore. "Monsieur Stephen Dorval," he began, "this is but the second day of our expedition, and still I have reason to regret that I accepted you as one of the party."

"May I ask your reason?"

"This is a sacred expedition," continued Joliet, without heeding the question; "it is undertaken in the name of a Christian king, and for the conversion of pagan nations."

"Monsieur, I am aware of all that."

"Nothing pertaining to superstitious practices must be tolerated," continued the leader. "We look to the protection of heaven and not to that of evil spirits."

"Monsieur, your words are a puzzle to me. All you say is true; but why do you regret that I am one of the party?"

"Because your superstitious practices will bring a curse and not a blessing on the expedition."

"I do not understand."

"You do not want to understand."

"I do. You have accused me of unfaithfulness, and will not give me the reason for your accusation."

"No reason is necessary; your conscience, if you had one, would be its own accuser."

"I protest against these insinuations."

"And I protest against your line of conduct. It is not too late; you are free to leave the party and return to the mission."

"Monsieur Joliet," cried Dorval, "I have been accepted as a member of the expedition, and I intend to remain a member. If you have any accusations to make, make them; but whatever be the nature of your complaint, I will never turn back."

"We are three to one," replied the leader coolly, "and if force should be needed, resistance on your part would be useless. But let me tell you why I have complained of your conduct.

Let me simply remind you that the charms which you practised last night, and the magic circle which you drew around the camp with your bear claws, are in keeping with the beliefs of a pagan Huron, and not consistent with the faith of a Christian."

"Did you see me draw the circle?"

"No."

"Did any one see me?"

"Pierre saw you."

"The fool. I did walk around the tent to fasten the ropes, but I made no marks. I did not have the bear claws to make them with."

Joliet was silent. "Come," said he after a short pause, "let us see those marks."

"Perhaps you have both been talking to the wind, and there were no marks," suggested Latoupine, who had with regret listened to the words of the leader and the outlaw.

"Suppose I restore peace and harmony by the sweet charms of music," said Moussart, as the

four took their way to the site of the camp.

"There can be no doubt about those marks," affirmed Lataupine, as he stooped and examined the circle and the impressions made by the claws. "The circle was made by some one who has lived with the pagan Hurons, or who has closely observed their practices. The double ring is there, and the marks of the claws are the proper distance apart."

"What have you to say to that?" asked Joliet of Dorval.

"Monsieur," was the reply, "I give you credit for some sense and more logic. The marks are there and therefore I made them. Let me tell you that I did not make them. Until you spoke to me I did not know that the marks had been made. I have nothing further to say."

"I have it," affirmed Lataupine, bringing his closed right fist into the palm of his left hand. "I have it. It is the work of Paul, and he learned it from Red Bear, the young friend who

ran away from home with him and taught him all kinds of superstitious practices."

"I beg your pardon, monsieur," said Joliet, turning to Dorval. "I was too hasty in my conclusions. I should have investigated before making the accusation. I trust that this our first misunderstanding will be the last."

"I know it will," replied Dorval as he grasped the hand of the leader. "I have started on this expedition with the intention of serving my king so faithfully that all past offences will be forgotten."

"It must have been a joke of the boy," resumed Joliet as the men retraced their steps toward the lake.

"I fear it is no joke," was the answer of Lataupine. "I've had an eye on those two boys for the past six months — the Huron has been making a pagan out of his French companion."

"If he made the marks, it was in jest," interrupted the leader. "The boy has too much com-

mon sense and too much faith to put his trust in such nonsensical practices."

"Pardon me, monsieur," affirmed Dorval, "while these infernal practices of the Indians have never made any impression on me, and while, as I stated and here again state on my honor, that I did not make the marks last night, nor ever in my life was influenced by witnessing any diabolical tricks or incantations, yet I have seen trappers who were completely won over by the Indians. They believed in all kinds of devil-worship, and never set a trap without invoking a devil. It is just possible that the boy has been influenced by his long association with the pagan Huron."

"I hope your explanation is not the true one," replied Joliet; "still we shall have time to talk the matter over after our canoe has started. Voilà! the other canoe is far ahead of us; let us start at once."

Lataupine and Dorval took the oars; Joliet

steered, and Moussart played upon his fiddle. Throughout the day the conversation turned upon the mysterious circle, and all were agreed that they had been drawn by Paul. It only remained to discover the motives of his action.

CHAPTER X.

THE SECOND CAMP-FIRE.

"YOU are a good oarsman, Paul," said Father Marquette. "I have watched you all day and have wondered how you could row without being tired."

"It is a trick I learned from Red Bear," replied the boy.

"And there are other tricks you've learned from Red Bear," put in Pierre, who all day had been waiting for Paul to mention the name of the Indian. "I say there are other tricks you've learned from Red Bear. You've learned superstitious practices — devil tricks, which will keep the blessing of God from this expedition."

"What practices and what tricks?" asked the missionary who was surprised at the assertion of

the cripple, judging from his tone of voice that he was not speaking in jest.

"I'll leave him to explain," cried out Pierre, at the same time drawing from Paul's pocket a string of bear toes, which he held out before the priest. "This little rascal has become a pagan," he continued with some warmth. "He has brought these bear toes to draw magic circles around the camp at night and by the power of the devil to keep the devil away."

Paul made no reply to the accusation.

"You do not believe in such practices?" asked the priest.

"Why did he make the marks? Why did he bring the devil things along?" argued the cripple without waiting for the boy to reply.

"Red Bear gave them to me," said Paul turning toward the missionary who was sitting in the stern of the canoe.

"And he gave them to you to draw magic circles," affirmed the cripple.

"Not so fast, monsieur, give the boy time to explain."

"Pardon me, Father, but it's bad enough to have a fiddle on the expedition to draw the attention of the savages; but it's worse to have charms and bear toes to draw the attention of the devil." Then Pierre was silent and Paul explained how he happened to have the bear claws in his possession.

"Father," he began, "I did bring those claws with me, and I received them from the Bear. When we were gathering the lilacs on the island and the Huron saw the convoy of canoes, he suddenly left me standing near the high bluff from which he afterward leaped to swim for the canoes. Running back into the bushes he placed a string of claws in a bunch of lilacs which I had cut; afterward when I went to collect the flowers the claws dropped to the ground. I picked them up and kept them for —"

"Such tricks as you played last night," interrupted the excited Pierre.

"Let him finish his story," said the priest.

"That is all I have to say, Father. I picked up the claws and kept them to remember my Indian friend."

"And to draw circles," insisted Pierre.

"What circles?" asked the boy.

"The circle you drew around the camp last night, and you stopped every three feet to press the claws into the ground."

"This is the first time I heard about it. I must have been walking in my sleep."

"And you did not make the circles?"

"Not while I was awake."

"Parbleu, if you did not make them I know who did."

"How is this?" asked the missionary; "a moment ago you accused the boy of making the circles around the camp and now that he denies it

you say that you know who did it. Did you see Paul drawing the circle?"

"It was Dorval I saw going around the camp and in the morning I saw the circle. Still I knew that the boy had the claws with him and wanted to find out whether he had been guilty of the superstitious practice. He denies it; then it was Dorval!"

"Perhaps he did it in jest," replied the priest mildly.

"It was no jest when he brought the fiddle along in the box and was the cause of my throwing the cooking oil into the lake," remonstrated Pierre. "That was no joke — and there is going to be trouble on this expedition with all this music and Indian incantations."

The priest only smiled at the gloomy predictions of the cripple. "It will not happen again, for if Monsieur Dorval understands that we do not approve of such jokes he will not repeat them."

By this time the two oarsmen had taken up their paddles and the light canoe glided over the water near the shore. Close behind followed the second canoe with its four voyagers. They, too, had at times referred to the mysterious marks which had all but caused a rupture between Joliet and Dorval.

The shadows from the tall pines along the lake shore were reaching out over the water, a signal for the weary voyagers to land and prepare their camp for the second night's rest. As they were in the land of friendly Indians no precautions were taken against an attack or surprise. La-taupine soon had his camp kettle swinging from a tripod over a blazing fire, Joliet and Moussart raised the tents, Father Marquette was walking quietly along the shore reading his office, (the prayers which the priest has to recite each day), while the three remaining members of the expedition collected dry wood for the cook. No time was lost in seeking for game or fish, as the party

had sufficient provisions to last for several days.

Father Marquette insisted on all joining in prayers before seeking their much needed rest. Moussart then played upon his fiddle, greatly to the dismay of Pierre, whose imagination pictured a party of Iroquois darting from the bush to scalp the Frenchmen.

On the following morning, there around the camp were the marks of the bear claws. Every member of the expedition disclaimed having made them. Pierre accused Paul and Dorval; Lataupine accused Pierre. Both Joliet and the priest laughed at what they considered a joke of the cripple. Moussart alone was silent.

CHAPTER XI.

A CLUE AT LAST.

"WHY did you change places with Moussart?" asked Dorval of Pierre, when the canoes were some distance from the land.

"Why did he change with me!" was the only answer. "'Twas his doing and not mine."

"He may not be the guilty party," continued Dorval; "but I wish to make one assertion. The man who has been drawing the circles around the camp is in the small canoe."

"It isn't Master Paul," spoke up Lataupine. "I have been suspecting the little rascal; but last night I had a long talk with him and he assured me that he knew nothing about the matter."

"Then it is either Moussart, or Father Marquette," said Joliet.

"By the Holy Angels!" cried the cripple, "who would dare accuse the priest of such devil tricks?"

"Don't be too hasty," affirmed Dorval. "I have not accused the priest. Besides, in my opinion he could draw the circles as a means of protection and still not be guilty of superstition." Both Pierre and Lataupine were about to interrupt him, but he silenced them and continued. "Let me explain. Father Marquette has not lived with the Indians as long as some of us; and yet he knows more about them. The missionary gets to the heart of the Indian; he is never deceived; he knows just when there is danger, just when to let them alone. I did not say that the priest drew the circles; but he may have drawn them. He may have heard of some threatening danger, and that this danger could be averted by drawing circles around the camp."

"He never would do it; he could not do it," argued the pious Lataupine.

"You do not seem to catch my explanation," pleaded Dorval. "I know as well as you do that the missionary does not believe in superstitious practices; but he knows that Indians do believe in them. He would be justified in making use of them as a means of self-protection."

"Never!" cried Lataupine horrified at such teaching.

"Parbleu! never!" reiterated Pierre.

"I appeal to you, Sieur," said Dorval, turning to Joliet, "am I not right?"

"If I understand the case it is this," replied the leader. "Father Marquette has been informed that Indians will not kill those, around whose camp a circle has been drawn with bear claws. He knows that the Indians are influenced by superstitious motives and therefore he makes use of their superstitions to protect himself."

"That is exactly the case."

"He would never do it!" interrupted Pierre.

"Never!" exclaimed Lataupine.

"We are waiting for Sieur Joliet to decide," said Dorval.

"If I could save my life in this way I'd do it," replied the leader, "for it is not wrong."

"So would I do it to save my life," said the cripple, "but the priest wouldn't; it's wrong."

"I didn't intend to bring in the question of the missionary," continued Dorval. "Lataupine is responsible for that. When I said that some one in the small canoe drew the circles I referred to Moussart. Let me explain again. The night before we embarked on the expedition Moussart and myself went over to the mound where the Hurons were dancing and beating their war drum. We got separated in the dark, and he crept much closer to the spot than I did. I did not know at the time that the infernal noise they made had anything to do with our expedition. I believe now that Moussart discovered some secret plot to murder us and that the magic circles would be a protection to us. He said nothing

about the matter, to avoid any useless alarm, but still he drew the circles as a protection."

"Now that you mention the fact, I recall that he never said a word when the rest of us were accused of drawing the circles," put in Joliet.

"And yet," replied Dorval, "if there is danger I do not see why he should keep the matter from us."

"Nor I," answered the leader.

"They were not drawn by the missionary," affirmed Lataupine, anxious to defend the good name of the priest.

"They were made by the devil, and some night I am going to catch him," asserted the cripple.

That night after supper Dorval asked Moussart to stroll with him along the lake shore. The latter consented, and, during the conversation which followed, assured his companion that he knew nothing of the cause of the marks and had received no intimation of any danger.

CHAPTER XII.

ANOTHER MYSTERY.

FOR four days the voyagers skirted the northern shore of Lake Michigan, camping on the beach and twice finding in the morning the mysterious marks around the tents. Once at midnight the party was aroused from sleep by cries of alarm from Pierre. The frightened Frenchmen leaped from their beds and grasped their weapons. "Mille tonnerres! I've caught the devil at last," he exclaimed. "By the holy angels, it must be the devil and no one else who is making the charms around the camp. He has owned this country so long that he doesn't want us to teach the Indians about God. Listen and you will believe me. And I'll tell it just as it happened. The boy and the priest were sleeping with me in our tent, but I wasn't sleeping.

Parbleu! not a wink! not a wink the blessed night! I'd the covering so arranged that I could see if any one passed in front of the tent and kept the fire burning all night. Not a wink did I sleep — not once did I close my eyes; and just now when I went to put some faggots on the fire there the circles were. No one could have made them! so it was the devil."

With difficulty the priest quieted him, and then called on all present to promise that they would not continue what he called a joke. Although the marks were defaced they were found again in the morning and on every successive morning until the outlet of the Bay of Puans (Green Bay) was reached and the camp was made in the woods, where it was all but impossible to distinguish the impressions on the ground.

Into the bay flowed a little stream. As the fresh meat had given out, the whole party left the camp one evening to fish, and on returning found the mysterious circles around the camp.

Pierre, who had gone some little distance farther up the stream, returned to the camp later than the others and brought with him more fish than the rest of the party.

"Why did you not call us, since they were biting so well?" asked Joliet, holding up the string of fine brook-trout for the admiration of the party.

Pierre only shook his head in a way that showed he was displeased about something.

"You must have had a bear claw with you for good luck," put in Lataupine.

"Believe me, messieurs, I did not catch a fish."

"Then where did you get the fish?" asked the priest, in the midst of a general laugh.

"Where did I get them? You will not believe me when I tell you. Parbleu! You will accuse me of being in league with evil spirits."

"But tell us about the fish," demanded Joliet, as the party still examined the splendid catch,

and wondered how one person could take so many in so short a time.

Pierre still shook his head.

"I do believe the poor man's mind has been affected," whispered the priest to Joliet.

"He has been acting strangely for the past few days," was the reply.

"And yet," said the missionary, "he has worked steadily at the oar."

"Tell us my good man, how did you catch so many fish?" continued the priest, taking the hand of the cripple.

"Parbleu! What I said is gospel truth. I did not catch a fish."

"Then where did you get them?"

"Found them hanging on the limb of a tree."

This statement was followed by a roar of laughter; and master Paul turned a handspring on the soft sand.

"I told you, you would not believe me," as-

serted the cripple, "and I don't blame you, for I scarcely believe myself. But it is gospel truth. I sat until it was getting dark without having a single bite. As I was rising to start for the camp I heard some noise, and turning around, I saw the string of fish hanging on a small tree near me. Explain it if you can. It is as much a mystery to me as the marks around the camp."

"I half believed that the marks were made by the power of the evil spirits," said Lataupine, "but now that these spirits have brought us fish to eat I am at a loss to explain either fact."

"The old fool is lying," asserted Dorval. "He cannot frighten or deceive me with his stories. He was sure that he saw me draw the circle on the first night; then he saw Paul; and now he has a wonderful story about spirits bringing him a string of fish."

All enjoyed a hearty supper on the fish so mysteriously provided. The missionary and the leader, after some consultation, decided that it

was more prudent to remove the camp and to extinguish the fire to prevent a surprise. They were now drawing near the villages of the Menominee, or Rice Indians, on the upper part of the Bay of Puans. It was just possible that some friendly Indian had brought the fish; and it did not seem impossible that an Indian would present his gift in this way. It was equally possible for some unfriendly or thievish Indian to rob them if they kept the fire burning brightly.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE RICE INDIANS.

"THERE is the mission and there is the cross planted by Father Allouez," said Father Marquette to Paul as their canoe glided along the northern shore of the bay of Puans, which narrowed until it was but a few hundred yards in width. As the priest spoke he pointed to an Indian village at the upper end of the bay, where some fifty wigwams of birch-bark gleamed like banks of snow among the green foliage. On an elevation, with its arms outstretched against the glowing western sky, stood the mission cross erected by that pioneer laborer, Father Allouez.

"And are all the Menominees Christians?" asked the boy.

"No, my child, not all of them; in every village there are some who resist all the efforts of the missionaries."

"Just as the Red Bear did," suggested the boy.

"Just as the devil is always doing," interrupted Pierre, ever ready to fight at the mention of the Huron's name.

"But let us hope and pray that they will all be baptized some day," replied the priest, not heeding the words of the cripple. "But see," he continued, "here is the wild rice of which I have been talking all day; it is just appearing above the water. In September, when the Indians gather the harvest, the stems are about six feet in height."

Here in the upper part of the bay the water is shallow and the entire surface was covered with wild rice. The French gave it the name of *folles avoine* or wild oats. Growing in the slimy bottoms of rivers and marshes, its slender stems

clustered together so closely that the surface of the water was entirely concealed and presented the appearance of a vast stretch of cultivated land. During the spring and summer months wild ducks sported therein, and fished and dived in the muddy bottom for crawfish; linnets and blackbirds rested upon the fragile stalks, which swayed and dipped their bearded heads into the water; and shoals of perch found protection from the bass and pickerel which swam with difficulty among the tangled growth. But it was in the fall that the scene was the busiest and most varied. Then the Indian fought with bird and animal for the possession of the harvest. Early in September the grain began to ripen. Flocks of blackbirds gathered the first fruits of the harvest, for they could pick the grain before it was sufficiently ripe to be shaken from the bearded heads into the Indian canoe. After a few days the Menominee appeared upon the scene. It mattered not how early he came, the birds were always be-

fore him. He pushed his canoe out into this submerged field where nature had planted and cultivated his harvest. Great flocks of birds arose in a wild chorus of fright as soon as he appeared. He needed no wagon to carry the straw to the wigwam, he needed no sickle to cut it. With both hands he bent the stems and shook the yellow grain into the canoe. Here was a bountiful harvest for the idle child of the forest.

In many a marsh of Wisconsin, and many a river, the scene has changed but little to-day. Wild ducks still dive for minnows and crawfish, and linnets and blackbirds still rise in flocks from the submerged fields of ripening grain; only the Indian and his canoe have vanished from the scene.

Soon the Menominee Indians saw the two canoes of the voyagers, and ran to the bank to meet them, their greeting being all the more demonstrative, as the Black-gown was noticed in

the party. On leaving the Menominees the previous year, Father Allouez had promised them that he would send another missionary to take his place. Thinking, therefore, that Father Marquette had come to remain with them, they led him to a wigwam near the mission cross, and extended to his companions every sign of hospitality.

That night a great feast was prepared for the strangers, at which stewed fish and rice were served. Then the pipe of peace was smoked and the chief welcomed the Black-gown in the name of the tribe. After this ceremony, Moussart was invited to play for the host and his people. The Indians were charmed with the music, for not one of them had ever heard the note of a violin before. Moussart played until he was tired, but the chief and the tribe clamored to have the music continued. To entertain his audience he played until his fingers were numb and the instrument fell from his hand. For a moment the guests

were puzzled; they wished to humor their friends, and at the same time they saw that Moussart could play no longer. Lataupine was the first to solve the problem. He concluded that the noise was the only thing that pleased the Menominees, and that they could not distinguish one note from another, so he grasped the violin and began to draw the bow over the strings with rapid motion, whereat the savages expressed their delight by low moans and by clapping their hands vigorously. The instrument was then passed to Joliet and on to each of the visiting party, not excluding the missionary and Pierre.

Father Marquette could speak the language of the Menominees, as it was but a dialect of the Huron tongue. He therefore addressed the people and explained the object of his visit. They were grieved to learn that he was to leave them on the following morning, and pleaded with him to remain; first, because they wished to listen to his instructions, and secondly, because they be-

lieved that he and his companions were going to certain death. The chief arose and repeated the words of warning which the savages at the mission of Saint Ignace had given; he told the story of the frightful monsters that swallowed up men and canoes; of the demon whose voice was like thunder, who stopped the current of the river and engulfed all who dared approach; of the excessive heat which infallibly brought death; of the war parties which roamed the country and killed all whom they met.

The missionary thanked them for their advice, but told them that he could not follow it, as the salvation of souls was concerned; that he was sent by the Great Spirit to teach the Indians the way to heaven and was willing to lose his life for them; that he feared not the demon or the river monsters. After instructing the Christian savages, he dismissed them with a promise to repeat the lessons on the following morning, and to re-

turn if possible and remain with them after the voyage of discovery.

The priest was about to enter a wigwam, which had been assigned to him and Paul, when the lad leaped to his feet and cried, "Father, father, I'm bitten by a rattlesnake!"

"Lataupine, Lataupine," called the priest, as he stooped and examined a red mark upon the lower part of the boy's left leg.

"Here I am," and the trapper ran from the wigwam where he was sleeping.

"*Serpent-à-sonnettes,*" exclaimed the priest, indicating the peculiar flower or weed used for counteracting the poison of the snake.

"Serpent, serpent!" cried Lataupine at the top of his voice, and the whole village was in a commotion. A dozen ugly squaws came with remedies made of the snake-weed. This weed or flower resembled the Indian turnip or jack-in-the-pulpit, and was a sure cure for snake bites.

"Just do as they tell you, my lad, and they will cure you," was the order of Lataupine, as he rested the boy's head upon his knee.

A squaw applied a poultice to the wound and bound it with bark.

"That stings worse than the bite," protested Paul.

"Don't mind the sting; one sting is cured by another," was Lataupine's reply.

"And what is that for?" asked the lad, as another squaw approached and offered him a morsel which she had just taken from her own mouth.

"Don't ask so many questions. She has only chewed the snake-weed to remove the bitterness. Swallow it at once."

The lad obeyed. Then half a dozen squaws surrounded him, each presenting a mouth full of the weed which she had chewed. Paul looked at one then at another. "Monsieur!" pleaded he, "is there no other way of saving my life?"

"No! no! you must take it all."

Morsel after morsel was crammed into his mouth. "Poor boy," muttered the priest who was witnessing the scene. "But the Indians and Lataupine know best; do as they tell you."

The squaw who had put the poultice on the wound removed it, and, stooping, sucked the poisoned blood from the leg, after which she covered the sore with another poultice.

"Here is your last dose," said Lataupine, as he held to the boy's mouth a gourd of water in which had been dissolved some powdered snake-weed. The Indians believed that by both internal and external applications the effects of the poison would be more quickly and easily counteracted.

While the squaws were administering the medicine within the wigwam, fully twenty braves were searching for the snake, believing that its death would bring about a more certain and speedy cure of the victim. Each of them was armed with a

forked stick by which he could capture the snake without killing it. It was finally caught and brought into the wigwam, and in the presence of the sick boy was forced to swallow the same morsels which had been given to Paul. As soon as it ate the weed it became rigid and in a few minutes was dead.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE FIRE NATION AND BEYOND.

THE remedies administered by the squaws entirely removed the swelling from the leg of Paul, who on the following morning was able to resume the voyage. As it was thought more prudent not to let him row, he exchanged places with Joliet. The Indians provided him with a mat of reeds which was placed in the bottom of the large canoe so that he could lie down all that day.

The voyagers had now rowed more than two hundred miles. Shortly after leaving the Menominees' village, they entered the mouth of a small stream now called Fox River. On the banks of this river, and near the present city of Green Bay, lived the Fire Nation. They, too,

had been converted by Father Allouez and had been among the most docile tribes west of Lake Michigan. The priest was consoled to find a large cross erected in the center of the village and the savages eager for instruction. But his stay among them could not be prolonged. The cabins were made of reeds instead of birch, as the bark was scarce in the low swampy country. Corn fields surrounded the village, plum trees were numerous, and grape vines garlanded the trees and shrubs.

Beyond this village no Frenchman had passed; the voyagers therefore took with them two guides. It was with feelings of mingled fear and curiosity that they departed from this place and turned the prows of their canoes into waters never yet disturbed by the oar of the pale-face. Up the waters of the current of the Fox River they slowly worked their way, paddled across the large lake, now called Winnebago, and again entered the upper branch of the same river.

No one enjoyed this part of the voyage more than did Paul. Resting upon his mat of reeds with his head elevated sufficiently to observe all around him, he viewed with never-flagging interest the shifting scene of sky, earth, and water. Now it was a lazy turtle which, awakened from sleep by the sound of the oars brushing against the side of a log, fell clumsily into its slimy domain; now it was a flock of ducks or blackbirds which rose in clamorous chorus from out the reeds and wild oats; now it was a deer which sped away as it scented danger, even though it had never heard the crack of the deadly rifle or the voice of man. At times, the pines in unbroken phalanx reached down to the water's edge; then there were patches of birch, and when the ground was hilly oaks and walnuts were numerous.

As the party proceeded in a southwesterly direction, the channel of the Fox River became narrow and was all but choked by the grass and wild

oats. Even the Indian guides with difficulty picked their way through the tortuous, mazy current. Often they would leave the party and search for the channel an hour before finding it. Early one afternoon they informed the Frenchmen that the portage was but a few hundred yards away.

As the water was shallow and the banks high and dry, both Frenchmen and Indians disembarked and dragged the canoes up the stream, then, lifting them on their backs, carried them across the short portage to the Wisconsin (Meskousing) River.

"And this is the current which is to bear us to the great river of New France," exclaimed Marquette, glancing out over the clear swift stream.

"If our calculations are correct, this river should carry us to the Mit-chi-sipi," replied Joliet, as he carefully let down from his shoulder the canoe which he and Dorval were carrying.

"Judging from the direction of the current, and the time it has taken us to reach this point, we have not failed in our calculations." Then the priest removed his hat and glanced back at the other members of the expedition to see whether all had arrived. "Let us return thanks to God," said he, "for assisting us thus far in our attempt, and let us beseech Him to lead us on in the right way."

All fell upon their knees and prayed in silence for a few moments. Truly it was a time and an occasion to invite prayer. The voyagers not only stood upon the banks of a strange river, where no white man had ever placed his foot; but they were turning from the tributaries of the great inland seas, and committing themselves to currents which would carry them — they knew not whither. Would this current dash them over some cataract, would it carry them to the Pacific Ocean or to the Gulf of Florida or to the great river which they were seeking? They knew not.

"No more rowing," said Lataupine, who was the first to speak after the prayer was finished.

"That's just what I's thinking of when I was saying my prayers," put in Pierre.

"Then you should say your prayers again," remonstrated the priest laughingly.

"Well, I was thanking the Lord for giving us so strong a current after so many days of rowing. You see it has been uphill work since the day we started."

"It has been hard work and you all deserve praise for it," admitted Father Marquette.

Dorval in the meantime was examining the canoes to see whether any gravel had fallen into them. "Perhaps it would be better," suggested he, "if the current were not so swift; for you must remember that we have to make a home trip."

"We'll let that take care of itself," replied the cripple. "If we find the great river we'll be willing to do anything to bring the news to Quebec."

CHAPTER XV.

WONDERFUL STORY NUMBER TWO.

AS the two Indian guides wished to begin their homeward trip immediately, Lataupine prepared a meal for them and gave them provisions for two days. Father Marquette gave to each a necklace of glass beads, which more than repaid them for their service. The Frenchmen followed them back across the portage and watched them until their canoe was lost in the winding stream.

"Let us hunt and fish for the rest of the day, and then start early in the morning," suggested the leader of the expedition, when the party returned to the banks of the Meskousing.

"I am in favor of it," replied Lataupine.

"And I," said Dorval and Moussart.

"And all of us," put in the cripple.

"I can't say that I need a rest," were the words of Paul, "for I've been resting for many days; still I'm anxious to have a fish."

"And I'll take my rifle and look for a deer," said Pierre.

"Come and go fishing," pleaded Joliet, who took great delight in joking with the cripple. "Come and go fishing, and if we do not catch anything you can find a string hanging up in the trees."

"I'll find a deer strung up in the trees."

The fishing proved a failure, but the fishermen succeeded in killing a number of ducks. When darkness came on, a fire was built, and all had returned except Pierre. Father Marquette, who had stayed at the camp, reported that the cripple had taken one of the canoes and gone up the stream to get a deer which he had killed. Soon the hunter returned bringing a young doe; but he refused to tell when or how he had killed it.

Before retiring that night the cripple called

Joliet aside to communicate to him a secret. "Call me crazy if you will," he began in a whisper. "Say the country is haunted and full of devils and ghosts, and that I'm a fool: but I'm going to tell you the truth."

"You always tell the truth."

"Parbleu! I do. But this is so strange you won't believe me; just as you won't believe about the fishes."

"It was hard to believe about them."

"Parbleu! That it was; but still it happened."

"And what strange thing has happened now?"

"That is just what I want to tell you about. You know that I went hunting this afternoon."

"Yes."

"And I was alone."

"Yes."

"But you won't believe me, monsieur."

"Go on; go on and tell me."

"You will think that I am crazy, monsieur."

"Nonsense! you said that you had something important to tell me."

"But it is so wonderful, so strange; and yet I am sure it happened, for I brought the deer to the camp."

"So it is about that deer you killed."

"Yes, monsieur. As I said before I was alone. But I wasn't alone all the time. I was sitting on a dead tree quietly looking around, when coming toward me was an Indian. On his shoulder he carried a deer. He stopped about fifty feet from me and hung the critter on the branch of a tree; then he made a noise to be sure that I had seen him and ran away."

"It must have been one of the guides."

"No, he was smaller and wore different stripes on his leather jacket."

"That is strange."

"I told you so; and how is it that all these strange things happen to me."

"I can't explain it; but it must have been one of the guides. You see they left us early in the afternoon so as to kill the deer for us."

"But there was only one, and why did he not bring the deer to me or bring it to the camp?"

"Indians do strange things," was Joliet's only reply.

The two walked slowly to the camp. "Say nothing about this affair to any one. Don't even tell Father Marquette; some day we may find a solution to the riddle, for to me it is a riddle," were the last words of the leader.

After supper the fire was extinguished and the camp moved farther down the river. Moussart asked to play upon his fiddle before retiring, and was somewhat angry because permission was refused.

On the following morning, before the sun was visible over the treetops, the tents were struck and the canoes were ready. "Gentlemen," said Father Marquette, as he was about to step into

his canoe, "we have been reminded more than once that this expedition was undertaken in the name of religion. Thus far we have committed ourselves to the guidance of those who have traversed the country through which we passed, but now we are to be our own guides. We need the protection of heaven. As it pleased God to take a virgin for His mother and thus to give Himself to mankind, so has it pleased the same God to bestow favors upon mankind through this same Virgin Mother. From the beginning I placed this expedition under the special protection of the Immaculate Virgin Mother, and now, when the danger increases and the way becomes more obscure, we have more need of her guidance and protection. I wish, therefore, that you would join with me in reciting each morning the *Memorare* three times in honor of the Immaculate Mother."

Down upon the sand the voyagers knelt and prayed to Mary Immaculate, a practice which

they continued during the rest of the voyage. Then the canoes were pushed from the shore and were soon drifting rapidly down the swift current of the Meskousing.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE ISLAND BIVOUAC.

ALL day long the canoes were carried rapidly westward by the winding current of the Meskousing. It required a strong and experienced arm to prevent the crafts from being grounded upon the shore of the numerous islands, so that Pierre's dream of idly floating down the river soon vanished; and when night came on, he affirmed that he preferred the rowing on the lakes to the work of guiding the canoes down this shallow and treacherous water.

"I'm an old sinner if this isn't the hardest day's work I've done since we left the mission," were his words when the leader gave the signal to land on a wooded island for the night.

"And where was the work?" asked the priest,

who with Joliet had occupied the same canoe as Pierre. "We simply drifted with the current."

"But we couldn't drift where the current did. It can hit a bank and then graze off again like a bullet from the bark of an oak tree; but if we hit the bank we stick there."

"And do you think that the current is as swift and regular as it was, when we started this morning?" asked the priest.

"When Pierre has answered I'll give my opinion, for I was just thinking about that very question," interrupted Joliet.

"Well, Pierre, what do you think?" pursued the Jesuit.

"Since Sieur Joliet has told us that he has been thinking about the matter, I'll let him answer."

"No, no; I want your opinion."

"I never like to give my opinion about a place or thing until I've seen it several times."

"Let me answer my own question," put in the

priest. "As you two did the work, I've had time to make observations. It appears to me that the current has weakened considerably since noon. The banks are less abrupt and the forest-growth is thicker. I predict easier work to-morrow."

"I agree with you, Father," were the words of the leader.

Pierre dropped his oar and turned upon Joliet. "Ha, ha," laughed he, "now I understand why I've been working so hard all day. The priest was making observations, and Joliet was helping him, and there was no one left to help poor Pierre."

The second canoe now drew near. "You must cook supper to-night, Pierre, for I'm going with the boy to look for some leatherwood. You know the ropes on the tent broke last night," said Lataupine.

"*Nom d'un chien!*" exclaimed the cripple. "I've been doing two men's work all day, and now I'm to cook supper." He then explained to

the rest of the company how the leader had confessed that he had been making observations instead of rowing.

Joliet acknowledged that he had neglected his work, but claimed that it was unintentional, as he was so charmed with the landscape that he at times forgot to guide the canoe.

With all his pretended complaint Pierre was only too glad to prepare the meal, as he could season and cook his favorite dish of sagamite to suit his own taste. Joliet and Marquette walked down the stream to examine the island, Lataupine and Paul rowed over to the mainland to find the leatherwood, Dorval and Moussart raised the tents, and Pierre began the work of cook.

From a small box he took a handful of pulverized cedar bark, which he placed on a dry stone. Kneeling over this, he held a flint and struck it with an iron bar, shielding his hand with a leather glove from the sparks which flew at each stroke. Gradually the bark was ignited

and when blown upon burst into flame. Particles of wood were added, and soon a fire was burning beneath the iron kettle. Such a kettle was a luxury which few explorers or trappers had in those days, and Pierre insisted that the sagamite cooked in it was not as wholesome as that made by the Indians, who boiled the water by throwing heated stones into a dish of bark or wood. Still it was far easier to use the kettle, and the cripple submitted to what he considered an unnecessary encroachment upon primitive ways.

Into the boiling water he threw hunks of deer-meat mixed with fat. Then a quantity of corn meal was added, and the whole flavored with dried sage and a little salt.

In the meanwhile, Lataupine and Paul were searching for the leatherwood; and as it did not grow in the damp soil along the river they were forced to penetrate into the forest farther than they were accustomed to go.

"Keep near me," were the warning words of Lataupine, "for it will soon be dark."

"I see a few bushes up above that rock," said Paul; "just wait until I examine them." He pointed above a ledge of rocks which ran parallel with the river.

"Don't go alone, boy."

"I'm afraid that you will not be able to climb the rocks," replied the boy. Grasping the scanty growth, and pressing his toes into the crevices, he began to mount up the steep ledge.

Half way up he slipped, and to prevent himself from falling, leaped into the branch of a small tree, three feet from the rocks. "A good jump," exclaimed Lataupine. The tree, which was not sufficiently strong to sustain the weight, bent slowly to the ground, snapping in the center just as the lad was on his feet. "What kind of wood is this?" he asked, as he brushed aside the branches which covered him in the fall.

"Ha, ha!" laughed his companion, "you are

a fine woodman, a hunter, a coureur-de-bois, an explorer, and don't know leatherwood from pine."

"The largest leatherwood bush I ever saw," was the reply. "It is a real tree. You are an older hunter than I am, and why didn't you see the leatherwood?"

"I confess, Paul, that I should have seen it, but like yourself I was looking for a bush and not a tree. You see we are getting into a strange country where bushes grow into trees. Had it been in the spring or fall, neither of us would have made the mistake. But get to work, and let us skin the tree before it is dark."

In the early spring, before the leaf appears, the leatherwood is covered with clusters of light-yellow, funnel-shaped flowers; and in the fall it bears a reddish, oblong fruit by which it is distinguished at a glance from the other undergrowth of the forest. The slender twigs of yellowish-green are easily broken, and even the thickest

limbs are not as strong as those of other wood; but the bark is so pliant and strong that it can be used for ropes, bow strings, and fishing lines, and makes excellent material for weaving baskets. The Indian and the trapper were skillful in applying it to a variety of purposes.

"Fooled again," exclaimed Lataupine, as he threw down the bundle of bark near the blazing camp-fire. "Fooled again, boy; we have brought home some useless bark, not a particle of leather-wood about it." Lataupine felt humiliated at the mistake.

"Perhaps there is no such wood in this part of the country," said Paul.

"Well, if there is, I'll find it to-morrow; and I'll start to look for it before dark."

"May I go with you?"

"Yes, you can carry the bark to the camp; but I don't need your assistance in finding it." Paul whistled and Lataupine threw the bark into the fire.

After supper pipes were lighted. Moussart played upon his fiddle and Pierre recounted his experiences and told Indian legends.

CHAPTER XVII.

LATAUPINE SECURES THE LEATHERWOOD.

"NOW remember, boy, you are to follow me, and carry this axe, and cut the wood when I find it; but you are to give no directions." Such was the command of Lataupine as he and Paul left the camp late in the afternoon of the following day. The lad was amused at the seriousness of the old trapper, who was still fretting under the humiliation of having brought some useless bark to the tents, thinking that it was leatherwood.

On the two trudged in silence. The hunter or trapper will be engaged for hours without uttering a word; the solitude of the forest, or the loneliness of the prairie, or the stillness of the lake or stream, seems to overawe him and make him

pensive. But when the evening camp-fire is lit, he becomes talkative and hilarious.

The gloom of evening came on quickly in the deep woods. Paul lost his bearings and more than once wished to ask his elder companion whether he was sure of finding his way back to the camp. He was quite certain, too, that Lataupine had passed some leatherwood without recognizing it; but remembering the experience of the previous day, and the command of the hunter, he said nothing.

"These are fresher than I thought they'd be," whispered Lataupine, pausing and pointing to some footprints near the margin of a small stream. "I've been following the tracks for half an hour."

"I thought you were looking for leatherwood."

"We passed a whole thicket of leatherwood, and there," he continued, "not twenty feet behind us is a whole cluster of them. We are not far from the camp and have gone almost in a

circle. We can get all the bark we want in five minutes. But these tracks — evidently two Indians passed this way since noon."

"When did you first see the tracks?"

"I didn't want to frighten you, my lad. You remember that I stopped shortly after we left the camp?"

"On the hillside?"

"Yes."

"I thought you were looking for the wood."

"You are young, my lad, and inexperienced. There were evident signs of a fight there; deer, I thought, but now I see that they were Indians."

"Do you think that they are friendly?"

"Friendly or not, they must be miles away by this time. We must hurry back to the camp before it is too dark; but first we'll skin half a dozen of the trees."

Within a few minutes, each had a bundle of bark under his arm.

"Listen to that!" muttered Lataupine indig-

nantly, as the sound of a rifle broke in upon the stillness. "They fear that we are lost. Felix Lataupine has been in the woods too long for that. Do they wish to insult me? When I get back to the camp I'll let them know that I can find my way through any forest in New France." The speaker paused and placed his hand upon the shoulder of the boy. "Something in the bushes moved there," he whispered.

"And there was a noise," replied Paul, holding his rifle in readiness.

"Perhaps it's the deer wounded by the Indians," suggested the trapper.

"Or a bear," put in the lad.

"Evidently it is a bear," assented the hunter, as a muffled growl came from the thick underbrush. "Stay behind me, boy, but have your rifle ready." Holding in his right hand the axe which he had brought to cut the leatherwood, Lataupine worked his way in the direction of the sound. On the ground before him he saw a

dark object. "It's a bear, boy. Get back in the clearing behind a large tree, for it's wounded, and if it gets a hold of you it'll tear you to pieces."

Paul needed no second warning, for he knew well the danger which one ran in meeting a wounded bear.

Lataupine drew nearer to the dark object which was rolling in the bushes. He raised his axe to strike, but just as the fatal blow was about to fall, he recognized the form of an Indian. Closer investigation showed that the savage was bound hands and feet.

"Are you wounded?" asked the Frenchman in the Ottawa language.

No answer came.

"Are you wounded?" he repeated in Huron.

Only a groan was heard.

The Frenchman stooped and cut with his axe the thong of leatherwood which bound the Indian's feet. Then he slowly released the Indian's

hands, guarding himself against any sudden attack.

Once free, the Indian leaped to his feet and darted like an affrighted deer into the clearing. "Watch out, he's coming!" yelled the Frenchman to Paul.

"Must I shoot?"

"No."

Paul had his rifle raised as he saw the bushes part. The bear seemed to be standing on its hind legs, an evident sign that it intended to attack him.

"Must I—" that was as far as the young huntsman got. He intended to ask again whether it was prudent for him to shoot the wounded animal; but he couldn't finsh the sentence, so astonished was he to see an Indian leap from the bushes and as suddenly disappear in the dark forest.

"That Indian was bound by the two whose footprints I saw near the creek," said Lataupine,

coming to the boy. "They seized him at the place where I thought the animals had been fighting, bound him and left him in this cluster of bushes."

"Indians generally kill their prisoners," replied Paul, recovering his power of speech.

"We are among strange tribes, my lad. But let us hurry on to the camp and tell them to stop that cussed shooting, or they will have a whole village of savages here to-night."

There was some consternation in the camp when Lataupine related what had happened. Supper was hastily eaten, the fire extinguished, and the two canoes were for an hour moored in the middle of the stream. The party then quietly landed on an island, and pitched their tents.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A BEAR WITHOUT ITS SKIN.

ABOUT an hour after the party had retired, there was a wild yell in front of the tents.

Each jumped to his feet and grasped his rifle. There in front of the tents stood the cripple holding in his hands a large bear skin.

"*Mille tonnerres! mille tonnerres!*" he cried. "I caught the bear and its skin came off and the bear ran away. What, what did I say? I caught the bear and its skin came off! I must be mad! I must be crazy! You will not believe me! I scarcely believe myself. The bear was making the devil marks around the camp. It must have been the devil! I must be crazy! I must be mad!"

"Let us see the skin," said the priest, trying to quiet the cripple.

"The bear is gone now, don't be afraid of him. We'll help you," were the reassuring words of the leader.

"That skin has been in the bottom of our canoe since the time we left the mission," affirmed Dorval in a low voice to the leader.

"Yes, yes, his imagination has driven him crazy."

"He has made those marks around the camp," continued Dorval.

"He has always been such a sensible man; his rheumatism must have affected his mind," added Sieur Joliet.

"Am I crazy? Was that the devil? And how did his skin come off in my hands? I must be mad!"

With difficulty Father Marquette quieted the cripple, as the two seated themselves upon a log near the tents.

In the meanwhile, the other four men were examining the skin. Dorval was confident that it had not only been in the canoe during the whole of the voyage, but that he had frequently slept upon it; the others did not think that so large a skin had been brought on the expedition. Pierre, they believed, had procured the skin from the Indians at the last village, and had concealed it among the baggage. There was no explanation for his actions; all agreed that he had lost his mind.

As leader of the expedition, Joliet knew not what to do with the demented man. Would it be better to send him back to the Indian village and leave him there until the party returned, or was it safe to keep him as a member of the party, even though he could render no assistance?

When Pierre had been quieted and sent to rest, and the others had retired, Joliet sought the advice of Father Marquette.

"Do you think the poor fellow is crazy?" asked the leader.

"I fear he is."

"And what could have brought on the trouble?"

"I have one explanation. Years ago when he was hunting with François, and the latter by his music attracted the attention of the Iroquois, you know that several of the hunters were scalped. You know how he objected to the violin, and when we consented to François bringing it Pierre believed firmly that it would bring death to all of us. It may have been this fear of another attack that worked upon his imagination."

"He certainly objected to the music," replied Joliet; "but how could this have turned his mind to bears and magic circles."

"Insanity follows no laws; besides I am not sure of my theory."

"Would you advise me to send him back to

the Indian village or ought we to keep him with us?"

"If you sent him back, would the rest of the party wait here until those who accompanied him returned?"

"I did not decide upon that."

"And would you send him to the Indians to remain there, or would they bring him to our mission?"

"It would be cruel to leave him with the Indians until we returned; for in his state he would certainly be neglected by them and suffer from want."

"We certainly cannot wait here until two or more take the poor man to the mission at the strait and return, for if we did, winter would overtake us before we could explore or even find the great river."

"Do you think, Father, that he will be harmless?"

"I think he will; he may improve, too, and

even entirely recover. His trouble may be but temporary. Let us trust in Providence, which has thus far guided us, and which, I believe, will bring us in safety, and all with us, to the object of our desires."

On the following morning no one mentioned the events of the previous night. Pierre seemed but little disturbed. Occasionally he would declare that he would yet capture the bear which made the marks. As he was not permitted to row, he slept during the greater part of the day, and on the following night again disturbed the party by cries of alarm, and boldly asserted that he had seen the bear running up to the camp to draw the magic circles.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE VISION OF THE BEAR.

FOR seven days the explorers drifted down the current of the Meskousing. For seven days the scenes were monotonous and unvaried. The current did not grow sluggish, nor the high banks disappear, as the missionary had predicted. No new variety of trees or flowers were observed, nor did a new species of animal appear. The party, ever on the lookout for the strange and marvelous, grew tired of the ever repeated landscape.

Perhaps the condition of Pierre had served to throw a gloom over the voyagers; for the cripple seemed to suffer from some wild hallucination, and at night to behold the strangest visions of bears and demons. Joliet humored him by de-

claring that his services as watchman were necessary for the safety of the party, and that, as a consequence, he would have to rest and sleep during the day, so as to be able to be on duty during the entire night. He was instructed that it would not be necessary to give the alarm when the bear came at night to draw the magic circle; he was only to watch closely and keep the animal from entering the tents.

The cripple obeyed orders strictly, and during the rest of the voyage did not disturb the sleepers. But each morning he had a most remarkable story to tell about the nightly visitor, which came regularly, but in different disguises and attitudes. Sometimes the bear walked on its four legs and sometimes it stood erect; it even ventured out at night without its skin, or appeared in the form of an Indian. Every member of the party pretended to believe the wonderful accounts, and tried earnestly to impress Pierre with the importance of his work, the careful per-

formance of which would protect them from all danger.

About noon of the seventh day since the canoes had been launched upon the Meskousing, a heavy dark cloud appeared over the horizon to the west. It was not accompanied by strong winds, and yet it seemed to spread rapidly and to envelop the river in a heavy mist. To the left of the stream the bank seemed gradually to rise to twice its ordinary height, while to the right appeared swamps, covered with scattered patches of willows; directly in front there could be seen another ridge or bank of the river, so that all were puzzled to know in what direction the current would turn, or how it would find its way through the hills which seemed to hem them in on two sides.

And now a strong wind came over the hill in front and made the tree tops dance and gathered choppy waves around the canoes.

"Both canoes pull for the left!" cried the leader.

"No! no! to the right," came the loud voice of Lataupine.

"Better to turn back, for we have drifted out into a lake, and perhaps we'll not be able to find the shore on either side," were the warning words of Dorval.

"We are not in a lake," argued Joliet; "we have simply drifted out of the current."

"Pardon me!" was the reply of Dorval, "but the water is entirely quiet around us except for the waves."

"The waves are coming up stream and blocking the current," argued Lataupine.

The wind was growing stronger, the mist was thicker and the waves were mounting so high that the canoes were in the greatest danger of capsizing.

"To the right!" again ordered the leader.

"You are going to the left bank," affirmed Lataupine.

"How is that?"

"The canoes have been turned completely around since we began to talk."

"I do not believe it."

"Believe it or not; but don't you see that the waves are beating against the stern of the canoe, while but a second ago they were at the prow?"

Neither bank could now be seen, and the sun was so completely obscured that no one could distinguish the east from the west. It rained in torrents, and the wind grew stronger and carried the waves over the sides of the fragile canoes.

"Row, row! Row for the shore in any direction," came the orders of Joliet.

"No! not in any direction," remonstrated Lataupine, "turn the prows toward the wind and row on."

"And how do you know this will bring us to the bank?"

"I don't know, but it will keep us from capsizing until the storm has passed away."

"But we must reach the shore."

"Where is the shore?"

"I tell you, we are in a lake and may be a half a mile from the shore by this time," again asserted Dorval.

"Prows toward the wind," cried Lataupine.

"Here are willows and the shore to the left;" with these words Joliet tried to turn the canoe. But as he did so it was all but swamped by a wave.

"You have lost your senses and become a fool," declared Lataupine. "Do not turn the prow or we'll all be drowned."

Before the leader could answer, the willows had been lost from view. During the excitement the missionary did not utter a word. He did not know what advice to give. The storm had come so suddenly and treacherously that he was taken unawares. Joliet seemed right in wishing to reach the shore as soon as possible, and on the other hand Lataupine's advice to turn the prow of the canoes toward the wind and the waves was but common sense. Never before had the mis-

sionary seen Joliet so excited; yet he did not think it prudent to contradict his command. The Jesuit sat quietly waiting for those who were more skilled in handling a canoe to rescue the party from danger.

Pierre was awakened by the noise. "Look! look!" he cried, "the bear! the bear! He has been turned into an Indian. See his claws! the bear! the bear!"

As he screamed the words, an Indian canoe shot by the voyagers. It seemed to be carried by an invisible power. In it was an Indian standing erect and waving in his hands a bunch of bear-claws. When he passed the second canoe, the savage yelled, and diving into the water was seen no more. A peal of thunder rolled along a hillside which appeared above the mist in front of the canoe. The canoe, too, vanished in the mist, which was yet unbroken just above the water.

Before the explorers could recover from their

surprise the smaller canoe, in which were Joliet, Paul, and the missionary, was caught by a current and whirled around and then carried rapidly away; the larger canoe was caught by the same current and was immediately swept along toward the first.

"There are rapids ahead of us," called out Joliet.

"Yes, yes," came the voice of Lataupine from the other canoe.

"And there may be falls below," were the warning words of Dorval.

"Out from the current," was the order of the leader.

"To which side?" asked Lataupine.

"To the right."

The oars worked as if in a battle against death, but the current grew stronger and the light canoes were whirled along. Lataupine and Joliet had both seen the falls at the outlet of Lake Erie, and pictured to themselves a like cataract

to which they were being drawn. The priest prayed in silence, Paul felt his heart beat fast and he unconsciously grasped the side of the canoe; the men worked with redoubled energy at the oars.

Suddenly there was a rift in the clouds; the mist rose. Far to the right and to the left appeared wooded banks. There was a burst of joy and triumph from the explorers. Their canoes were sailing down the broad, swift current of the great river of the New World — the Mit-chi-sipi was discovered.

Father Marquette offered a prayer of thanksgiving. Then, extending his hands over the water, the priest said in slow and solemn words: "This river I call the River of the Immaculate Conception, in honor of Mary ever Virgin, the Immaculate Mother of God."

CHAPTER XX.

ON THE WIDE TIDE.

WHERE the Wisconsin empties into the Mississippi, its own waters are entirely checked by the stronger and wider tide of the larger stream, and form a basin with an eddy, in which a log or canoe will float for days, until by chance it is caught by the outer edge of the current. Into this eddy the canoes of the discoverers had floated just when the mist enveloped the river. The current was reversed, but was so feeble that its force was lost before the strong wind which accompanied the storm. The banks had disappeared, the canoes were threatened with submersion, and no one knew where to seek for shelter. It was in the midst of the excitement which followed that the canoes were caught by the current of the Mississippi, and were whirled

southward, before the storm-mist floated away and revealed the wooded banks.

"Have you any explanation to offer in regard to the mysterious appearance of that Indian?" asked the priest of Joliet, as their canoe sailed on.

"I was thinking of the Indian," was the reply, but the speaker did not turn his gaze from the great ragged bluffs, which rose somber and tree-topped to the height of four hundred feet.

"Then what is your answer?"

"It is his disappearance and not his appearance that puzzles me."

"Why did he approach us?" asked the priest.

"Do you remember, Father, how often the Indian at the mission spoke of the demon which guarded this river?"

"Certainly."

"And you recall that every tribe living along the lakes had the same story to tell about the demon?"

"Yes."

"Who could have started this strange rumor?"

"There is no accounting for Indian legends."

"I believe I can explain the origin of this one," continued Joliet; "and if my theory is correct, we are in danger of an attack at any moment. Keep a sharp lookout!" he cried to Lataupine, and those in the other canoe. "I say I have a theory about this legend," he resumed. "The Indians who dwell along this great river have heard of the fierce Iroquois and the other tribes of the east, and do not wish to be molested by them. For this reason they have invented the story of the demon and have deceived the other tribes, and by so doing have prevented them from penetrating westward. You remember how frightened the Miami were at the very mention of the name of the great river. No power on earth could induce one of them to accompany us. Now these Indians keep a sentinel at the mouth of the Meskousing to warn them of the approach

of strangers, who are immediately destroyed, and so the story of the demon is confirmed; for the other tribes believe that their friends have been devoured by the monster."

"Then the Indian whom we saw was a sentinel," interposed the priest.

"Certainly. Like ourselves he was surprised by the storm and the mist and could not find his way. He probably saw us approaching, but before he could escape the mist settled down upon the river. He lost his bearings and ran up close to us."

"But why was he standing in his canoe, and how was it propelled?"

"He was evidently rowing rapidly, and when he leaped to his feet, the canoe had sufficient impetus to carry it beyond us," was the explanation offered by the leader.

"But the claws," objected the priest. "I know that many tribes keep them for incantations; however, it seemed strange that he should use

them under such circumstances, and that he should hold them aloft as he passed us."

"He may have carried them as a protection; it is difficult to account for many of their superstitious practices," was the reply.

"And why did he leap from the canoe?" asked the Jesuit, who, although versed in Indian customs, was puzzled at the action of this guardian of the great river.

"Now that I have undertaken to explain difficulties and mysteries, I'll venture on a solution of this problem. I think that Indian was unarmed. It was his duty to act in a mysterious way on the approach of a stranger, and then to notify the tribe. Being without means of protection he probably dived into the water to escape our rifles. He evidently swam along with his canoe, keeping it between himself and us."

"That I can readily conceive," acknowledged the priest; "it is an old trick in Indian warfare. Possibly your explanations are correct. If they

are, we shall be in constant danger of an attack. Our taking possession of the great river was truly accompanied by the marvelous — the whole land enveloped in mist, the rain, the thunder-storm, the strange appearance of an Indian, the guardian of the land of wonders."

Those who occupied the other canoe were also discussing the matter referred to above, and were seeking for an explanation of the facts as they had witnessed them.

The party felt in comparative security, as the river was more than a mile in width, rendering surprise impossible.

Lataupine took a rope of leatherwood and, attaching an anchor to it, began to measure the depth of the water. Down, down went the rope, but the bottom of the river was not reached. More rope was added, but again the attempt was unsuccessful.

"Hold!" cried he to the canoe in front of him.

At the words Joliet grasped his flintlock. "On which side are they?" he asked.

"We see no one, but want to borrow all your rope to find out the depth of the stream."

"You frightened us," replied the priest.

"We are too far away from the land to fear any danger at present," were the assuring words of Dorval.

All the rope in the two canoes was tied together, and to the surprise of the party the water was fifty feet deep.

The river was flanked on either side by bluffs so high that Marquette called them mountains; at times they were bare and rocky cliffs, reaching down to the brink of the water; again they were clothed with foliage and ferns.

While all were admiring the beauty of the scene, the smaller canoe was struck by some object that made it dance and tremble in the current. All were much surprised at the occurrence.

"That could not have been the trunk of a tree," said Sieur Joliet.

"Nor a sand bank, for the water is too deep," replied the priest.

"I see it! I see it!" cried out Paul, "it's a fish as large as a man. It has no scales." Paul was all excitement and even Pierre was aroused by his explanations.

"Why, Paul, you have had the honor of discovering the great demon — the guardian of the Mit-chi-sipi," affirmed Sieur Joliet.

"Well, if he is afraid of us, and disappears before we can all see him, he can not be very dangerous," said the priest.

"There, there!" called out Moussart. All looked eagerly in the direction indicated.

"I see it!" cried the boy.

"And I, and I," came the chorus.

The party was gazing upon a huge catfish, about six feet in length. It was not the last they

were to see, for catfish served them for many a meal during the rest of the voyage.

Later on in the day another alarm was given.

"There's another large fish!" Moussart cried.

"There's the monster!" shouted Lataupine.

"It's a tiger," replied Dorval.

"No, a fish!" claimed the first.

"It's only a wild cat," said Pierre, catching sight of the animal, which now came in view of both canoes.

That night Father Marquette wrote the following notes in his birch-bark diary: "We came upon a monstrous fish which struck our canoe with such violence that I thought it was a great tree about to break the canoe to pieces. On another occasion we saw on the water a monster with the head of a tiger, a sharp nose like that of a wildcat, with whiskers and straight erect ears. The head was gray and the neck quite black. But we saw no more creatures of this sort. When

we cast out nets into the water we caught sturgeon and a very extraordinary kind of fish. It resembles the trout, with this exception — that its mouth is larger. Near its nose is a large bone, shaped like a woman's corset-bone, three inches wide and a cubit long, at the end of which is a disk as wide as one's hand. This frequently causes it to fall backward when it leaps out of the water."

"You have talked so little of late, and to-day you have scarcely uttered a word," remarked Sieur Joliet to Paul late that afternoon, as the canoe swept around a great curve of the river.

"Oh! monsieur, it is all so beautiful; how glad I am to be with you and Father Marquette."

"I myself, Paul, am happy to be a member of this expedition, and especially proud to be the representative of the government of New France. You little know what is the importance of the discovery we have made. It is beautiful! It is magnificent! It is sublime! Here is the work

of God untouched by the hand of man. We are sailing upon what is perhaps the largest river in the world. The Saint Lawrence may be as wide in places, but it has not the depth of this river, nor is it as grand a stream. I believe that this river drains a continent larger than Europe. Populous cities will rise along these banks, factories will utilize the water-power, heavily laden boats will sail these waters, and we shall go down in history as the discoverers of the great river of the new world."

"You are forgetting one important event in your glorious predictions of the future, monsieur," gently interrupted the Jesuit; "what of the Christian communities which will spring up here — the Indians, the French! What of the churches and schools! When your heavily laden boats plow these waters, the first sight to meet the sailors will be the crosses high above the churches."

"Certainly, Father, that was understood in my

prediction of the glorious future of New France; for wherever the Fleur-de-Lis is raised there you will find the Cross of Christ."

As evening drew on, Moussart played upon his violin — soft, dreamy music which was just heard above the whisper of the winds and the swish of the water against the sides of the canoes.

The party landed upon a small island for supper, after which the fire was extinguished and the canoes moored some distance from the shore. Here the tired voyagers slept, Pierre as usual keeping guard throughout the night.

"Well, Pierre," said the leader on the following morning, "I do not see any marks of bear claws around the camp."

"But I saw the bear," was the reply of the cripple. "He appeared above the water right there," he continued, pointing to the side of the canoe. "He may have come from the bottom of the river, but that's where I saw him. When he was just below the canoes, he suddenly turned

into an Indian — looked something like the Indian who passed us at the mouth of the Meskousing, yesterday. He made a circle around the canoes and disappeared."

"Poor old trapper, he has gone stark mad," muttered the leader.

CHAPTER XXI.

FRIENDS AND ENEMIES.

GLIDING between shores darkened by foliage, with giant sycamores overhanging the water,— past glinting sand-banks and entangled heaps of drift-wood, among numerous islands, green with patches of willow and fragrant with odors of the wild grape-vine,— day after day the voyagers drifted down the Mississippi. It was an easy task to guide the canoes in the broad current. At times, too, sails were raised. But the men suffered from thirst; for the warm, murky water of the river did not satisfy their cravings. The canoes were often brought to the water's edge, on the west shore where springs were abundant, but were immediately paddled out into the current again to avoid any surprise of hostile Indians. Father Mar-

quette, Sieur Joliet, and Paul were generally in the small canoe.

"Footprints, footprints," called out the priest one day, as the canoe came within a few feet of the bank.

"Not so loud, Father," whispered the cautious leader. "Well," he continued, as he caught hold of some grape-vines hanging from a sycamore tree and pulled the craft close to the footprints, "there is no danger, for the tracks are many days old."

"Would it not be well to follow the tracks?" asked the priest.

"We have come to discover the great river and visit the savages along its shore," was the reply of the leader. "There is some risk and we don't know how far the tracks will lead us. Still I think that we should not lose this occasion of visiting the Indians."

"It will be useless to expose the lives of the entire party," said the Jesuit. "My cassock will

be a protection for me, and I think that you will be safe as my companion."

"There is a narrow path leading to the river," reported the leader, who left the canoe and walked some distance along the shore. "Come," said he to Father Marquette, "let us start at once. Push out into the stream," were his orders to those who were to remain with the canoes. "Anchor at some distance from the shore to avoid a surprise."

"*Parbleu!*" protested Pierre; "you should not expose your lives. Let a worthless old fool like myself go, and if I am killed I'll not be missed; but if you two are killed what will become of us?"

"The leader should always set the example and take the most dangerous place," answered Joliet.

"Providence will watch over the missionary," were the gentle, assuring words of the priest.

Walking silently up the narrow path and through a strip of woods which skirted the river, the two Frenchmen found themselves upon the edge of a vast prairie which stretched to the west. They had not gone more than two miles when they discovered a village on the bank of a small stream, and two others on a hill about half a mile from the first.

"There," said Joliet, "are the long sought-for tribes on the banks of the great river."

"Yes, we have found the river, and the tribes whom I have so long wished to instruct."

"Shall we walk into their village without a word of warning?" asked the leader.

"I am at a loss to know what Indian etiquette requires; I think we should rather consider the safest way of making our entrance in the midst of these strange people."

After some deliberation the two shouted at the village with all their energy. At first a few Indians were attracted by the noise, then the whole

village was aroused, and four of the principal men of the tribe came forward to meet the strangers. They carried tobacco pipes with long stems, ornamented with feathers, and advancing with slow and dignified movements held the pipes aloft to the sun. The two visitors were conducted to the tent of the chief, who received them in a friendly way and, presenting the pipe of peace, addressed them in these words: "How beautiful is the sun, O Frenchmen! when you come to visit us; all our towns await you, and you shall enter our cabins in peace; never has the earth been so beautiful, nor the sun so bright as to-day; never has the river been so calm nor so free from rocks which your canoes have removed as they passed; never has our tobacco had so fine a flavor, nor our corn appeared so beautiful as we beheld it to-day. I pray thee, Black-robe, take pity on me and my nation. Thou knowest the Great Spirit who made us all; thou speakest to Him and hearest His word; ask Him to give us life and health,

and come and dwell with us that we may know Him."

Into a cabin made of reeds woven together by means of cords spun from buffalo hair, the visitors were then conducted. A great feast was prepared, in which the Frenchmen were fed like little children with wooden spoons. During this feast they conferred with each other about the advisability of sending for the other members of the expedition, and, concluding that there was no danger, they made known their wish to the chief, who with the entire tribe followed them to the shore.

On the way to the river, Joliet observed that there were two strangers in the crowd.

"Have you noticed those Indians?" asked he of the missionary, pointing at the same time toward two savages who were conversing by means of signs to the young braves of the Illinois.

"Are they painted darker than the rest?"

"Yes."

"And look like the pagan Hurons?"

"Exactly."

"What could have brought them here?"

"That is what I should like to know. But listen, Father, those Indians have come to-day. Just watch the small children. Why, those Hurons are as much objects of curiosity as ourselves. And see the young braves! how curious they are. I do not like the appearance of those two strangers."

"They are Hurons — pagan Hurons. What could have brought them here?" again asked the missionary.

"We must be cautious, Father, very cautious."

"Providence has protected us, my child; still we must not neglect the ordinary means of prudence."

"No, Father; I will tell Dorval what we have observed; and when you speak to the tribe to-night about religion I'll keep a close lookout."

CHAPTER XXII.

HOW THE COUNCIL ENDED.

THE voyagers were astonished to see their two friends leading to the river a whole village of savages. Returning to the shore, which they had left at the sound of voices, they were escorted to the village and forced to visit each of the three hundred cabins. A speaker went before announcing their coming; groups of children gathered around them, then ran forward, rolled upon the grass, and returned to view the pale-faces.

Joliet seized the first opportunity to inform Dorval of the presence of the Hurons.

"I know them; I know them," whispered Dorval when he had watched them carefully for some time. "We are in the greatest danger. We must slip away to our canoes as soon as possible.

Those Indians are from the mission and have followed us."

"Strange."

"Strange it is to me."

"If they came to hurt us they had many chances to do so," replied the leader.

"That is true. I only know that I saw them; they spent the winter with us at the mission and they were there a few days before we left. They are the tools of Poison Arrow. I tell you, monsieur, we are in danger."

"They know you then."

"Certainly, monsieur, they know all of us."

"If they came to kill us or to prevent the success of our expedition, again I ask, why did they not do so long ago?"

"I cannot explain it; but several things have happened which I cannot explain. Perhaps many more will happen which no one can explain. But, monsieur, I repeat it, we are in danger."

"They do not seem to think that we know of their presence," said Joliet.

"No, monsieur, and this is our only hope of escape."

During this conversation the visitors were being lead from one cabin to another, receiving at each stop some gift, generally a belt made of the hair of buffalo and dyed red or yellow. In return the Indians were presented with beads and pictures. At times the two strange Indians approached the visitors but generally remained behind them.

In the evening the chief called the entire tribe to listen to the Black-robe speak of the Great Spirit. "Black-robe," said he, "friend of the Great Spirit, here are my people. Come and tell us what we are to do to be friends of the Spirit who made us and who will punish us if we do not listen to His words. Some of our warriors have not come to listen to you to-night; they would not hearken to the words of their chief, and I hope

that the Great Spirit will punish them. But they are the young warriors and are foolish; but when they become old they, too, will listen to the words of the Black-robe. Come and speak to us."

"Leave this to me," whispered Dorval as he crept away from the assembly. In the midst of the excited crowd and the gathering darkness no one noticed the departure of the Frenchman.

Watching the direction which two of the young savages had taken on leaving the village, Dorval followed them at a distance. Coming to a little valley, he caught a glimpse of the place where the Indians were assembled, and on approaching closer saw a sight that would have appalled the strongest heart. Around the fire some twenty savages were dancing and smearing themselves with red paint. Many of the braves carried scalps taken in former battles. They cut deep gashes in their hands, arms, and breasts, and let the blood flow over the hideous trophies.

Then one of the Huron visitors harangued the

crowd, while an Illinois, who had been taken as a prisoner by the tribe and who knew the Huron language, acted as interpreter. "Brothers," said the orator, "listen to me, listen to two of us, for we have been sent to you by our chief, Poison Arrow. Many years ago the Black-robe came and taught us to adore the Great Spirit of the pale-faces. We believed his words and our whole nation was cursed by the Great Bear of the Hurons. He sent the Iroquois to burn our towns. Hundreds of our brave warriors were killed. We were driven from our villages. Our villages were burned. The bears left the woods and we had nothing to eat; our corn did not grow. The pale-faces came and took our lands. And now the pale-faces have come to kill you and take your land, and corn, and buffalo robes. Poison Arrow sent us to kill the pale-faces before they reached your country. But the Great Spirit protected them. Every night he drew a circle around their camp. We saw him come down in the darkness

of the evening to draw a circle when the pale-faces slept in their canoes. Every night we came to the camp; but every night we found the circle. Now we cannot hurt any one when his cabin is marked around with the claws of the bear. But to-night the strangers will stay with you and in the cabin of your chief, and the Great Spirit will not come to draw the circle with the claws of the bear, and we will kill the pale-faces. Only help us, brothers, and give us the scalps that we may take them back to our own country and give them to Poison Arrow. Or, if the Great Spirit comes to draw the circles you kill them, for your religion does not forbid you to kill those who are protected by the circle. The pale-faces have with them many beautiful things. They have two canoes swifter than those you build; with these canoes you can pursue your enemies and overtake them. All that we ask are the scalps of the pale-faces to take back to Poison Arrow, to show him that we killed the enemies of our race."

The young Illinois listened in silence to this speech. At the close of the speaker's words a sound was heard overhead,— the shaking of bear claws. Then the branches of the trees bent and from the tree dropped a figure in the midst of the astonished Indians. This figure was wrapped in the skin of a bear, and in his right hand he held a string of bear toes. With quick movements he drew a circle around the crowd before the Indians realized what had happened, then dangling the claws in the air disappeared in the dark forest.

The two Huron Indians uttered a wild cry of despair. "Run, brothers," they cried. "You see the Great Spirit of the pale-faces is stronger than we are. Run, run; but go not back to your camp cabins to-night, for you will all be killed!" They, too, dashed into the woods uttering hideous cries and were followed by the frightened Illinois.

Dorval stood for a moment as one petrified.

The blood in his veins seemed to stop. Finally he wiped the perspiration from his face and walked rapidly toward the Illinois' village.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE PIPE OF PEACE.

ON returning to the village, Dorval narrated to Joliet what he had witnessed, but did not inform the rest of the party. He and the leader concluded that there was no danger of an attack at night, for the superstitious savages would not dare injure the visitors after the words of warning of the two Hurons. Still, at their request, the chief ordered several of the elder warriors of the village to keep guard during the night.

Before departing on the following morning the Frenchmen witnessed the calumet dance so famous in Indian annals. In an open space in front of the chief's cabin were spread numerous mats of rushes. On the largest of these mats, which was richly colored, was placed the figure

of a fish, the Manitou of the Illinois Indian. In front of the fish was hung a large calumet, or pipe of peace, made of red polished stone. As the Indians approached the place they first saluted the Manitou by inhaling the smoke from the pipe and blowing it at the figure of the fish. Lastly came the dancer carrying a pipe with a long stem richly ornamented with feathers. He first raised the calumet to the sun, then inclined it to the earth, then as he moved to the sound of the music he presented the pipe to the different spectators to smoke. At the conclusion of the dance, the chief took the calumet and handing it to Father Marquette spoke as follows:

"Black-robe, you still have many miles to sail down the great river; you will meet many tribes who have sharp and poisonous arrows. You will often be in danger. Take this pipe of peace; it will protect you. When your enemies see it they will throw away their arrows and will become your friends."

The whole village accompanied the Frenchmen to the river, gave them provisions and assisted them in embarking. Father Marquette promised to return to the tribe later and instruct them.

"We have escaped many dangers," began Dorval, who had taken Paul's place in the smaller canoe with Father Marquette and Sieur Joliet, "but this was the greatest danger of all."

"I thought the Indians most friendly," said the missionary.

"They were," replied Joliet, "with the exception of the two Hurons whom we saw in the crowd last evening."

"I had forgotten all about them in my interest in the tribe; certainly the best disposed and the most intelligent Indians I have seen in New France."

Dorval then explained the scene which he had witnessed on the previous night.

"So those magic circles which were drawn around our camp and which, Monsieur Dorval,

nearly caused a rupture between us at the very beginning of the expedition, saved our lives," added Joliet.

"And who drew the circles?" asked Dorval.

"That is the question which we have been asking since the day we left the mission," replied the leader.

"I have suspected Paul," affirmed the former.

"And I, Pierre," put in the latter.

"Pierre and Paul, the two apostles," remarked the missionary with a smile, "they have perhaps been our best friends and our protectors and we did not know it. Well Providence has protected us, and in that Providence we shall trust."

"What precautions have we to take for the future?" asked Joliet.

"The two Hurons will certainly continue to follow us," asserted Dorval; "but if I see them again they will get a bullet from my rifle. They have come to kill and do not deserve to live."

For three weeks the Frenchmen drifted down

the great river, keeping as much as possible in the middle of the stream and approaching the banks only when necessary and always with the greatest precaution.

The vast prairies with their herds of buffalo gradually disappeared and in their place were cane-brakes and impervious forests of cotton-wood trees. The mid-day sun was oppressive, and at night swarms of mosquitoes filled the air. They passed the mouth of the Missouri and Ohio and found the river growing wider and the islands more numerous. Twice they met bands of Indians who received them in a friendly manner when they presented the calumet; but, as they could learn but little from these roaming tribes about the sea or ocean into which the river flowed, they did not tarry.

Finally on the seventeenth of July, just one month after the discovery of the Mississippi, the voyagers beheld, on the east bank of the river and just opposite the Arkansas, a band of In-

dians ready to embark in canoes and dispute their passage. In vain did the priest hold aloft his calumet, in vain did the others protest by signs that they were friends. As the large canoe of Indians drew near, clubs and stones were hurled at the strangers and arrows whizzed through the air; but luckily for the Frenchmen the savages did not have firearms. Dorval all the while stood, rifle in hand, searching in the crowd for the Hurons, who, he thought, had gone ahead of them and instigated the Indians to attack the party.

Suddenly every weapon was lowered and the attack ceased, for an old Indian had recognized the calumet and had ordered the braves to desist from fighting.

Two of the chiefs threw their bows and quivers into the canoe of the missionary as a sign of friendship and the ceasing of hostilities. On reaching the shore the Frenchmen were conducted to the lodge of the great war-chief and

were seated on mats, with the sachems and braves and people around them. All but the missionary were armed and ready to repel any attack. Dorval's keen eye failed to discover the presence of the Hurons. Still his suspicions were aroused by the actions of a few young braves who were induced by some signs of a companion to leave the assembly.

By means of a young Illinois, a prisoner in the tribe, Father Marquette spoke to the Indians of the mysteries of Christianity; and so impressed were they with what he said that they asked him to remain and instruct them in the doctrine of his holy religion. He explained to them that he had come to visit the tribes along the great river and later he would bring other Black-robes to remain and instruct them.

On Joliet's inquiring how far it was to the sea, he was informed that it was but five days journey. The difficulties and dangers were presented as almost insurmountable; for savages, armed

with rifles received from Spaniards, roamed the banks of the river and permitted no one to pass.

"Father," began Joliet late that evening, when the two were seated in the cabin of reeds provided for the visitors, "we have reached a stage in our expedition when prudence and foresight are required to prevent our losing the fruits of our labors. I wish to consult with you what is best for us to do."

"Yes we must be prudent," was the reply; "Providence has protected us; still we should not expose ourselves without reason."

"No, for if we perish, no one will be willing to undertake a similar expedition for years, and both religion and the advance of New France will be checked."

"Very true, indeed."

"Judging from our last measurements we are about thirty-three degrees from the equator, continued the leader. "The basin of the Gulf of Mexico extends thirty-one degrees north, so that

we should be able to reach it in five days at least."

"Can we say with certainty that the great river flows into the Gulf of Mexico?" asked the priest.

"I see no reason to doubt it; for one month we have been sailing in a southerly direction. Besides, the climate, the reports of the different tribes, and all the evidence we can gather, point to this fact."

"Then there is one thing to be considered — namely, is it prudent and is it worth the risk to try to reach the gulf?"

"That is the one thing to be considered," assented the leader.

"Then listen to a few words of advice," continued the Jesuit. "The founder of our Order was a most prudent man and a wise counselor. He gave his children some directions to guide them when about to decide on important affairs. Let us follow his advice. On the right side of a

piece of paper put down all the reasons for continuing our voyage to the gulf, and on the left side the reasons for the opposite opinion — consider the arguments and guide yourself accordingly. We have no paper and, not even a piece of birch-bark; but we can mark the number of reasons with a stick on the ground, and the facts are sufficiently fresh in our minds to be remembered. Let us see what conclusion each reaches, and then compare notes."

For fully half an hour the two sought to work out the problem. Dorval in the meanwhile was on duty. He noticed one of the chiefs leaving the village and going in the direction which the young braves had taken when they left during the council.

"We shall begin our return trip early in the morning," said Joliet, walking from the cabin to the place where Dorval was standing. "Father Marquette and myself think that it would be unwise to continue the voyage any farther."

"If it were not so late I should prefer to start to-night," replied the sentry. "I don't like things; I'll not sleep a wink to-night, and I'll not feel safe until we are twenty miles from the village."

"They are going to attack us now," were the warning words of the leader, as shouts came up from the wooded valley below and a dozen braves issued forth into the clearing.

All seized their guns.

"We are too few to withstand them," pleaded the missionary. "Let me see what I can do," and grasping his calumet he went forth to meet the angry mob.

The Indians came on; the crowd grew larger and more excited. They were led by one of the sachems who had hitherto been most friendly. Had he turned a traitor? and was he urging the savages on to an attack? As he walked in front of the crowd he carried two scalps dangling in his hands.

The excited savages gathered around the Black-robe, brandishing their clubs and hatchets above his head. Still he stood unmoved. The sachem, holding aloft the two scalps dripping with blood, began to harangue the missionary, and as he spoke the young Illinois prisoner interpreted his words:

"This morning, Black-robe, when you and the other pale-faces came to our village, we did not know you were friends and we went to kill you with our clubs. But you showed us the pipe of peace and we invited you to our village and we became friends. Two Indians came from a race which we have never seen. They came like snakes in the grass; they came to kill you and take your canoes and beads. They excited our foolish young warriors to kill you, and if the Great Spirit had not moved me to protect you, you would all have died this night. But now you are safe, for here are the scalps of your ene-

mies. Sleep in peace, and when the sun rises over the eastern hills we will be up to accompany you to the river and say farewell."

The priest had no time to answer. Almost by magic the hatchets and clubs seemed to disappear, and the Indians ran away to the cabins, from which they soon issued carrying large earthen bowls full of provisions, and a great feast was given the strangers to celebrate their deliverance from death. The entire night would have been spent in feasting if the Frenchmen had not pleaded for a few hours' rest previous to their departure. On the following morning, the seventeenth of July, and just one month since the day of the discovery, the seven Frenchmen turned the prows of their canoes northward.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE FIGHT IN THE WILLOWS.

NOW began the tedious and fatiguing work of rowing against the stream. The canoes were kept close to the shore to avoid as far as possible the strongest part of the current; but even with this precaution the labor was exhausting and progress slow. All were rejoiced when evening drew on and the party landed on an island to cook supper. Paul wandered off through the willows. He did not think the island was so large. He saw tracks of deer and wished that he had brought his rifle with him. There were other tracks, too, but the boy could not make out what animal had been there. There were beautiful shells along the shore. The boy wandered on and on with-

out noticing that he was far away from the camp.

Soon he reached the mainland and found that they were encamping on a peninsula. He would cross the narrow strip and follow the other shore back to the camp.

But the willows were thicker than he had anticipated. Then he came to an open place; there were the deer tracks again. He thought he heard a noise in the brush. He waited. Just in front was a cotton tree. A dark object was crouched in a lower fork.

The boy stood fixed to the ground — the object he saw was a wildcat. The animal was not facing him but was looking in the opposite direction and was crouched upon its feet ready to spring.

The willows moved again and a young deer walked out into the clearing. Paul could see its bright lustrous eyes. The wildcat trembled in

every limb. It leaped and in a moment its teeth were deep in the animal's neck.

Again the bushes parted. A large stag rushed at the wildcat and gored it with its antlers. For a moment the wildcat clung to its prey. Then it relaxed its hold. In another moment it was tossed ten feet in the air.

With a mad growl it struck the ground, but before it could regain its feet it was again thrown aloft. This time it was quicker and before the stag could reach it the wildcat sprang at the foe and set its teeth in its neck.

The stag gave a wild, piteous cry and tried to shake it off, but in vain. The wildcat dug its claws and teeth deeper into the flesh. The deer's sides were sprinkled with blood and the sand red.

Paul was in agony; for the moans of the stag were like the death cries of a human being. Near him he saw the limb of a tree, a dead branch protruding from the sand. He grasped it; but it would not yield. He placed his foot upon it

and with one mighty effort snapped it. Armed with this club, about two feet long and as thick as the wrist, he ran toward the animals forgetful of his own danger.

The deer writhed and groaned. The wildcat growled. The boy watched his chances. Crash! on the wildcat's head. The club broke. The wildcat released its hold and with another growl bent to spring at the boy.

Its efforts were feeble and it came to the ground with a thud at the boy's feet. It was dead. Paul noticed that there was a long gash in its side made by the antlers of the deer. He glanced to right and left and saw that the young deer was dead and that the stag with its head thrown back was gasping its last.

The boy sat down upon the sand and drew a long breath.

The willows at his side parted and an Indian stood before him.

"Eh! *bien!*" exclaimed the red visitor, who

saw only the boy and the dead wildcat at his feet.

It did not occur to Paul that the Indian had greeted him in French. They were friendly words and words of praise. He was frightened for a moment; then he reached out his hand. The two sat down in the sand.

* * * * * * *

It was growing dark and the members of the party were getting alarmed at Paul's long absence. When the boy appeared, he was carrying a young deer on his shoulders. His clothes were soiled and besprinkled with blood. All were curious to know how he had captured his prize. He told them briefly of the incident; but he said not a word about the Indian.

CHAPTER XXV.

PAUL PRACTISES INDIAN INCANTATIONS.

"GO 'way boy, don't shake them devil things around me."

"But I can cure you."

"Go 'way."

"I can cure you, I say."

"Take them devil things away."

"But I can cure you, monsieur."

"I won't be cured by the power of evil spirits."

"There! there they go! and I'll cure you without them."

Paul tossed a string of bear toes back toward the camp and seized Pierre by the arm: "Come! I can cure you."

It will be remembered that Paul had brought

with him a bunch of bear claws, which Red Bear had concealed in the cluster of lilacs, and that some were of the opinion for a long time that he made the marks around the camp. Sieur Joliet had on several occasions hinted to the boy that it would be a favor to the crew if he would discard the useless gift. But the boy clung to the present in remembrance of his Indian friend. Lataupine was still convinced that Paul and his bear claws had brought disaster to the expedition and had been the cause of Pierre's insanity. For many days Paul had kept the treasure from the sight of all and had now suddenly produced them before Pierre as the two walked along the edge of a narrow island where the party had encamped that night.

"Come! come with me!" pressed the lad.

"Go 'way."

"Pierre, listen to me."

The man stared with a blank, unmeaning look into the eyes of the boy who held him by the arm.

"Pierre, did I not risk my life to save you last year?"

"Yes, boy."

"Are we not friends?"

"*Ma foi,* yes."

"Won't you believe me? won't you take my word?"

The strange, unmeaning look was the only answer.

"Come with me, come just a little way down the island, for I don't want the others to see us."

"You will turn me into a bear."

"No, Pierre, we are friends." The boy's hand again grasped the cripple's arm.

"*Nom d'un chien,*" growled the demented man.

The boy shrank back. He saw now that he had made a big mistake in showing the bear claws to the cripple; still he did not lose hope.

"I meant no harm, monsieur," were his pleading words.

"You've been associating with the friend of evil spirits; boy, I will not have you near me."

"No, no, Pierre! you will not listen to me; if you did I could help you!"

"I am crazy now; and if you work with your charms you will turn me into a crazy bear; and I'll be crawling around the camp at night and drawing them devil circles."

"But, monsieur, did you not see me throw the claws toward the camp. I no longer have them with me."

"But you are possessed by the evil spirit. Don't come too close to me, boy." The cripple's hand trembled as he motioned the lad away.

"I will not go! Pierre, you must hear me."

"*Parbleu!* away!"

But the boy clung to the man's arm. "Listen, monsieur, listen to me."

"*Parbleu!* I will not listen."

"I can cure you."

"*Mille tonnerres!*" cried the man and sent the

boy sprawling in the sand. "*Nom d'un chien. Nom d'un chien,*" he repeated raising his clenched fist over the prostrate form.

The cripple turned to start for the camp, but in doing so he stumbled on a snag in the sand and fell prostrate. In a moment Paul was upon him as if to take revenge. But he only repeated the words: "Listen to me, monsieur, listen to me, Pierre, I can cure you."

The man fought to shake him off, but the boy clung to him, muttering the while something into the cripple's ear. Pierre seemed suddenly to become interested.

"Don't smother me," he moaned, "tell me the rest."

Pierre was still lying upon his back in the sand. Paul was bent over him rattling off something as fast as his tongue could go. Only once or twice he paused to look in the direction of the camp. Then he went on with his narrative. Pierre raised himself to a sitting posture and

wiped the perspiration from his forehead. Paul still talked.

"Stop! let me think." Pierre held out his hand and the boy became silent.

"Go on, go on now. I'm feeling better, much better."

Paul spoke but a few words more.

"Wait wait, my mind is not clear yet; but I'm feeling better I — I — I understand! but it is so strange."

Then the boy went on with his narrative. After a short time the cripple rose to his feet.

"Paul, you have kept your word and cured me. I do not understand now how I could have deceived myself. *Parbleu!* what a fool I've been."

"No, monsieur; I am surprised that all of us did not go crazy."

"What'll we say to the messieurs at the camp?" asked the cripple.

"Let me see," mused the boy.

"Eh, *bien!*" exclaimed the man. "I have it;

here is a new kind of plant. I'll just take a bit of it and tell them that it cured me."

"But that would not be true," objected the youth.

"It's only a white lie. I'll tell them I ate the weed and was cured. I won't say the weed did it."

Paul hesitated. He wanted some explanation for the sudden change in regard to Pierre; and still he had been taught that one could not tell a lie for any reason. There was a noise among the willows. Some one was coming from the camp. Pierre jerked the weed from the ground and bit a piece of the root.

Any one who has had the misfortune to taste the root of the Indian turnip, or Jack-in-the-pulpit as it is commonly called, will be able to understand the sensation which the cripple experienced. He coughed, and spat and ran to the river for water.

"What? what has happened?" demanded

Sieur Joliet, appearing from among the willows.

"Pierre — is, is, cured," stammered the boy.

"Cured?"

"Yes, monsieur; if it don't drive him crazy again."

"It? what?"

"A most wonderful weed — ah! Pierre is entirely cured."

"Nonsense; he's choking."

Both ran to the bank.

"Are you not cured, Pierre?"

The man's mouth was too full of muddy water to speak.

"He is cured," repeated the boy — "that's a most wonderful weed."

The leader was puzzled. Pierre was almost choking, the big tears were streaming down his cheeks; he had lost the power of speech, and still the boy was declaring that he had been cured.

"Where is the weed?" he demanded.

Picking up the Indian turnip which Pierre had

dropped, Paul presented it smilingly to the leader.

"It is the root which —"

"Which cures craziness," added Sieur Joliet.

"But burns the skin off one's mouth while it works on the brain," sighed Pierre, gulping down more muddy water.

Joliet questioned the man. Every answer was rational and to the point. The leader was amazed; for the cripple had truly regained his senses. What a wonderful discovery. Since the bulb of the weed or flower resembled a turnip, and its leaves, a lily, Joliet called the newly discovered plant the lily-turnip.

CHAPTER XXVI.

A MESSAGE FROM RED BEAR.

"I KNOW that you are not well, to-day Father; but may I speak to you for a few minutes?"

"I am far from being well, Paul; still it will not pain me to listen to you."

"Please, please tell me when you wish to rest," faltered the boy, who was startled when gazing at the worn and pallid features of the missionary. He knew that Father Marquette's strength had been failing him for a month; but never before had he seen the priest so wan and so completely exhausted.

"That portage seems to have taken away the little strength I had; still we are near the end of our voyage and should be thankful to God for having so mercifully protected and supported us."

Nearly two months had passed since the seven

Frenchmen had begun their homeward trip from the mouth of the Arkansas river. They had followed the Mississippi to the Illinois and, rowing up the latter stream, had reached Lake Michigan by means of a short portage and a river. Coasting along the lake to the peninsula which juts out south of Green Bay, they followed an Indian trail where can now be seen the town of Sturgeon Bay and the government ship canal. Marquette's failing health had been completely exhausted. The priest, who had been for days resting in his canoe, did not realize how weak he really was until he began to walk for some distance up the side of the steep ridge, leading from the lake shore. At first he insisted on carrying his part of the luggage, for all during the expedition he had shared the hardships of his companions. He was forced, however, to relinquish his load, and soon afterward was supported by Dorval. On reaching Green Bay the party rested to give the priest time to recuperate before starting for the

Mission of Saint Francis Xavier, at the head of the bay. One of the tents had been raised over the sufferer and here it was that Paul found Father Marquette taking his needed rest.

"I came to tell you about Red Bear," said the lad as he bent over the missionary.

"Have you not forgotten him? He has been gone so long."

"No, Father, he did not go to Quebec."

"Did you not see him leap into the water and join the flotilla?"

"Yes, Father, but he took a canoe and returned to the mission that evening."

"Have you met any one from the mission lately?"

"No, Father."

"Who brings such news?"

"I have been talking with Red Bear."

"Impossible, my child."

"No, Father, Red Bear has saved our lives;

not one of us would be here to-day if he had not protected us."

"I do not understand."

"Red Bear was with us during the entire voyage."

The missionary looked into the boy's face with a vacant stare. "I must be dreaming," said he. "What did I understand you to say?"

"Red Bear was with us during the whole voyage; the two pagan Hurons would have killed us if it had not been for Red Bear."

"I understand what you say; but how can it be possible?"

"Perhaps it would be better for me to explain it some other day," apologized the lad as he began to withdraw from the tent.

"Come, come; tell me all, my child."

Paul stood for a few moments with his hands clasped before him; he regretted that he had disturbed the quiet of the Jesuit. "I'll tell you in a

low voice if you think it will not disturb you, Father."

"I thought that I had misunderstood you; but tell me, tell me all; what was that you said of Red Bear?"

"Father, you know that Red Bear has ever been my friend. When we started on the voyage four months ago he thought that we were going to certain death. He wanted to help me if he could. He knew that he was not wanted in the party; and his pagan superstitions kept him at a distance from you. He therefore decided to follow us, but in such a way that no one would know of his presence. He joined the Indian flotilla to make us believe that he went to Quebec and at the same time to get a canoe. He came back to the mission that very night and was present at a secret council of Poison Arrow and heard the chief give his instructions to the two Hurons who were to follow us and murder us before we reached the Mississippi."

"So he was sent to be our guardian angel," interrupted the priest.

"He is not an angel, Father; but I hope he will be some day, for I often pray for his conversion."

"And I," added the missionary; "but go on with your narrative."

"Red Bear knew that the Hurons would not injure us if we were protected by a circle drawn with bear claws. This then explains the reason of the magic circles; Red Bear drew them. It was he who brought the string of fish and the deer to Pierre. And do you remember, Father, that Lataupine and myself found an Indian lying in the bushes with his hands and feet tied? We were looking for leatherwood that day; and the Indian we found was Red Bear. If he had not escaped and made the circles that night none of us would have seen the sun rise the next morning. It was his canoe which sailed behind us the day on which we discovered the Mississippi. He did

not wish to kill the two Hurons, as they belonged to his tribe; but still he protected me and all of you for my sake."

"It was God who protected us, my child. Providence makes use of strange means in the accomplishment of its ends. But why did you not tell me of this sooner?"

"It was the wish of Red Bear that I keep it secret from all until we reached the mission; but when I explained that the mystery had affected Pierre's mind, he consented to my telling him. I have been fishing with the Bear this morning, and he gave me permission to reveal the secret to all the party. I'll now go and tell Sieur Joliet."

"Truly, God has watched over us," muttered the priest when Paul had left him alone. "Blessed be God's name forever." *

* The main facts of this narrative are taken from the fifty-ninth volume of the Jesuit Relations; but the superstitious practices of Red Bear are, of course, fictitious.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE GRAVE OF MARQUETTE.

A STRONG gale was blowing westward over Lake Michigan. Fitful gusts caught the tops of the naked hills and sent showers of white sand far out over the water, pelting like rain drops upon the surface and frightening the wild ducks which had taken shelter under the lee of the elevated shore. White-capped waves tossed a small canoe which kept close enough to the land to avoid the wind and yet at a sufficient distance to escape the broken swells which receded from the beach. In the canoe were three voyagers. One was lying upon a mat in the bottom of the craft with his hands folded upon his breast; the two others were plying their oars, pausing at times to ask

their companion whether he was in need of anything. One of the oarsmen was suffering from rheumatism in his legs, which he kept covered with a buffalo robe.

* * * * * * *

More than a year had passed since the discovery of the Mississippi River. Joliet and Dorval had conveyed the joyful tidings of the discovery to Quebec, and special dispatches had brought the news to France. Dorval on account of his services had been pardoned by Frontenac. Lataupine and Moussart had joined a party of trappers. Marquette with Pierre and Paul had remained at the Mission of Saint Francis Xavier at the head of Green Bay. After a year's work among the Indians the Jesuit missionary resolved to keep his promise and return to the Illinois whom he had met on the banks of the river of that name. In November of 1674 he started upon this, his last mission to the Indians, hoping to reach them before the cold weather had frozen

the rivers. But he was detained during the winter near the present city of Chicago, and on the following spring, resuming his voyage, arrived at the Indian village during the season of Lent. For three weeks he instructed the Illinois, but his strength was gradually failing him, and he felt that he would have to abandon his flock, and seek health and strength with his fellow laborers at the mission of Saint Ignatius, at the Strait of Mackinac.

He had with him two companions, Paul Guibeau and the faithful Pierre. The latter had suffered almost as much as the priest, so that Paul had been the servant of both. But Paul was not alone.

Unbidden the Huron, Red Bear, had followed the missionary and his companions. During the severe winter, when Paul was daily at the side of Father Marquette and when Pierre's rheumatism prevented him from leaving the rude lodging, the Huron brought to the camp game and

fish and corn. The latter was procured miles away at an Indian village, the journey being made on snowshoes. It was remarkable how the Indian boy could obtain provisions for himself and the three Frenchmen, and at the same time shelter himself from the cold. He came to the cabin when he was least expected, night or day, placed his provisions near the door and disappeared. Even Paul saw him but seldom, and all his solicitations could not induce Red Bear to join the party.

On returning from the Illinois mission to the Strait of Mackinac, the party resolved to follow the eastern shore of Lake Michigan, as this was the shortest way. Red Bear, who had been with them at the mission, again followed them; at times his light canoe could be seen dancing over the water at a short distance from the Frenchmen.

The missionary's sufferings were acute and the unceasing rocking of the canoe aggravated his

woes. One afternoon the voyagers reached a small stream near the present city of Ludington. Here the priest asked to rest. The canoe was pulled ashore and a rude cabin of bark was constructed to protect the sufferer from the chill wind.

"I am afraid that I shall never reach the mission," said the priest to Paul, who stooped to arrange a buffalo robe over the form of the sufferer.

"Do not say that, Father. I took care of you during five months of last winter, and now that the warm weather is coming I hope to see you well."

"If I reach the mission alive," grunted Pierre, rubbing his rheumatic legs, "I'll stay at home, for these long voyages are too much for one who hasn't the use of his legs."

"Perhaps I made a mistake in permitting you to come with me," replied the priest.

"*Parbleu,* not at all! I couldn't see you go

alone to the Illinois country! No, no, not even if I lost my life!"

"Both you and Paul have been so kind to me, that I shall never be able to repay you."

"It has been a pleasure trip for me," confessed Paul. "I haven't been sick an hour, and can never forget the experiences of last winter."

"I'd hoped to wait on Father Marquette," interposed Pierre, "but I was only in the way, and you had the double task of serving both of us."

"It was not a task. I could scarcely call it work."

"But your work is not yet over, my lad," said the priest. "I do not know how long I am to linger here; but I am afraid that you will dig my grave on this hill."

Paul did not reply. As Pierre was too crippled to move about, the boy erected poles over the place where the missionary was lying, and covered them with skins and bark. Within the little cabin he built a fire and then began to prepare

a meal. He had only a little corn and tea left, but he knew that he could rely on Red Bear for fish or game. In less than half an hour the Indian approached the cabin carrying half a dozen wild ducks which he had caught in a net. He handed them to Paul and departed without uttering a word.

The priest would not eat the supper which the boy had prepared. "Paul," said he, reaching forth and taking the boy's hand, "God bless you, my lad, for all that you have done for me. I feel that the end is not far away. Remember what I have told you about my last moments. You have the bottle of holy water which I blessed. Bring the little bell and the crucifix from the canoe, for I may need them to-night. Remember what you are to do. When you think that I am dying, hold the crucifix before my eyes and pronounce aloud the holy name of Jesus."

Tears filled the boy's eyes. Pierre sat near with his head buried in his hands.

Darkness came on. Paul knelt at the side of the priest and prayed. Unobserved, Red Bear crept near the cabin and drew around it the magic circle with bear claws. Death, thought he, could never enter the place thus protected by the Great Spirit.

"You are tired and need sleep," whispered the priest; "lie here by my side, and when I want you I shall awaken you."

Hours passed and midnight was approaching. Paul was aroused by a gasping noise. He stirred the smoldering fire and saw by the dim light that the priest was dying. He raised the crucifix above the head of the sufferer and pronounced the sacred name aloud several times. Father Marquette repeated the name and kissed the crucifix which the boy presented to him. After a brief agony the great missionary expired.

* * * * * * *

Three weeks after the death of the missionary, a single canoe reached the mission of St. Ignace

on the northern shore of the Strait of Mackinac. In it were Pierre, Paul, and Red Bear. Who should meet them but Lataupine!

"And the rheumatism has left you," said he to Pierre, who stepped from the canoe and without limping walked toward the priest's cabin.

"I've been cured by a miracle; by a great saint; but come to the mission-house and let the boy tell Father Dablon about it."

Lataupine understood from the tone of the speaker that something strange had happened. The party walked in silence to the cabin of Father Dablon who met them at the door. "Are you from the Mission of Saint Francis Xavier?" he asked.

"No, Father," replied the boy, "from the Illinois."

"What has happened? You seem dejected."

"In the first place, Father Marquette is dead." There was a silence and then the boy continued. "Pierre was cured by a miracle. He could give

me but little help in burying the priest, but as we were about to leave the grave, Pierre knelt to pray. Then he picked up a handful of earth from the grave and applied it to his legs. Immediately the swelling and the suffering left, and he walked to the canoe without limping. Pierre was so overcome that he could not speak. After a brief pause the boy continued. "I have other good news. I have brought Red Bear to you for Baptism. When his magic circles were unable to keep death away from the priest I talked to him about the Great Spirit. He has thrown away his claws and is ready to receive Baptism, for I have instructed him every day. He joined Pierre and myself after the death of Father Marquette."

* * * * * * *

Two years later the body of Father Marquette was brought to the mission and interred beneath the altar. Paul in the meantime had returned to Quebec. But Pierre remained at Mackinac to

act as servant of the missionary. Every evening when his work was finished he would slip away to the little chapel and there pray before the altar. But no evening did he forget to thank God for the favor of his cure, and for the conversion of Red Bear.

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